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Special Issue on Inclusive Education

Summerville School, built in 1883 near Carberry, Manitoba

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Cover Painting

Phyllis (Elliot) Baker, Brandon, Manitoba
Phyllis attended Summerville School from 1941 to 1950.
Her father also attended the school from 1883 to 1886.

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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the fourth issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 2, issue 2, range from first-year Graduate Diploma students to a Ph.D. student and university lecturer. I thank these current and past BU Faculty of Education graduate students for sharing their work. Together, they have produced a collection of articles with a focus on inclusive education.

- John Kreshewski's refereed article provides a historical context for the inclusion of children with emotional and behavioural disorders.

- Ann Barbour-Stevenson's research report reveals findings related to the transition between high school and post-secondary education.

- Joanne Bradley's refereed article examines the effects that inclusive education has had on the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers.

- Tracy Maffenbeier's refereed article outlines supports that will maximize the learning potential of high school students with ADHD.

- Janna Kehler's refereed article offers strategies to differentiate classroom instruction for children with various exceptionalities.

- Kathy Byrka's refereed article examines the responsibilities of counsellors and teachers in working with gifted students.

- Heather Scholz's refereed article explores the use of technology to assist second language learners in the classroom.

- Rena Gillingham's refereed article suggests interventions to support the teachers who work with students who have emotional behavioural disorders.

- Debra Leslie's refereed article contemplates strategies for assisting children with ADHD to realize their academic potential.

- Carole McCurry's refereed article explains autism and offers practical suggestions to teach social interaction in the inclusive classroom.

- William Terry's opinion paper recommends extending the school day to accommodate the increased programming requirements in today's schools.

- Ted Stouffer's opinion paper explores the roots of teacher burnout and suggests ways to counteract the stress that causes it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

Research Report

Transitioning from High School to Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba 4
Ann Barbour-Stevenson

Refereed Articles

Caring for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: A Historical Overview, Current Perspective, and Future Direction 6
John Kreshewski

The Changing Roles of Special Education Teachers in the 21st Century 14
Joanne Bradley

A Collaborative Approach: Emphasizing Student Responsibility and Trained Teachers, to Increase Success of the Adolescent with ADHD 18
Tracy Maffenbeier

Differentiating Instruction for Students with Exceptionalities 24
Janna Kehler

Educating Gifted and Talented Students: An Educational Paradigm 28
Kathy Byrka

Second Language Learning in the 21st Century Classroom 32
Heather Scholz

Supporting Teachers of Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders 37
Rena Gillingham

Teachers Matter: Promoting Positive Outcomes for Students with ADHD 43
Debra Leslie

Understanding Autism 48
Carole McCurry

Opinion Papers

In Support of Extended School Hours 52
William Terry

Issues Surrounding Teacher Burnout: Questions and Possible Answers to an Increasing Problem 53
Ted Stouffer

Call for Papers 56

RESEARCH REPORT

Transitioning from High School to Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba

Ann Barbour-Stevenson

As part of my Master of Education degree, I undertook a qualitative research study that focused on the transition from high school to post-secondary education in Manitoba. My study sought to examine four key areas of the high school to post-secondary transition:

- the high school structures that help to facilitate the transition
- the high school structures that hinder the transition
- common obstacles encountered by first year post-secondary students
- geographic, demographic, and socio-economic factors that influence the high school to post-secondary transition

The word *transition* was deliberately chosen in defining the scope of my research. The progression that students make from high school to the post-secondary system is truly a transition. In order to truly understand the process, in addition to external factors such as school structures and norms, internal changes such as evolving relationships and growing autonomy must be valued and discussed.

For this study, I used qualitative inquiry based in grounded theory. As such, the words and experiences of the research participants directed the results and my conclusions. I also used collective case study. In this case, fourteen first year post-secondary students and three high school members were interviewed and shared their insights into the high school to post-secondary education transition.

The richest sources of information were the interview transcripts of the fourteen first year post-secondary students. Over a period of approximately six months, I interviewed first year students from three post-secondary institutions in Manitoba. All of the student participants were concurrent students. That is, they had graduated from high school in June and proceeded sequentially to post-secondary studies the following September. All of the students were graduates of high schools in Manitoba.

I asked the students open-ended questions, in order to let their words paint a picture of their experiences as both high school and post-secondary students. Through the interview questions, the student participants were challenged to compare and evaluate the degree to which their high schools had prepared them for the transition that they were experiencing.

I also used open-ended questioning for my interviews with the high school personnel. In total, three high school staff members were interviewed: two administrators and one guidance counsellor. The questions posed to the high school staff members were designed to extract their thoughts and practices related to post-secondary education in their high schools.

After the transcription and analysis of the interviews, six themes relating to the transition from high school to post-secondary education in Manitoba emerged, as follows:

- sources of trusted information
- accepting independence
- academic realities
- social adjustment
- college versus university
- individual experience

I used the insights and knowledge gained from examining the six themes in order to clarify my four key areas of concern regarding the transition from high school to post-secondary education.

The structures that facilitate and structures that hinder the transition were considered together. The student research participants believed that having high school teachers with high expectations, and completing high school courses with a high level of rigour, facilitated their transition to post-secondary studies. They commented that the teachers who challenged them academically and demanded quality products were in alignment with realities that the students faced in their post-secondary courses. They also valued the high school curricula that had direct connections to post-secondary courses. The development of a positive work ethic in high school was also seen to facilitate the transition to post-secondary education.

The relationships that students had with their teachers and guidance counsellors factored in the transition to post-secondary education, as well. Several student research participants commented on taking courses or committing to a field of study based on the recommendations of teachers or guidance counsellors. Several of the students had been inspired to pursue post-secondary studies based on what they had learned in the classroom or in co-curricular experiences organized by their teachers. Conversely, students commented on having transition challenges due to the lack of information given by guidance counsellors at their high schools.

The main obstacle identified by the student research participants was the transition of becoming part of the post-secondary campus. Many were challenged by adapting to the new structures, norms, and cultural identity in which they were now functioning. Finding classrooms, understanding how to use the library, figuring out where to eat lunch, learning how to take notes, and developing new relationships were at times problematic. Another common obstacle identified by the student research participants was the need to become self-autonomous learners. For the first time in their lives, the student research participants were in charge of and responsible for their own learning. Being autonomous meant learning how to take notes, develop effective study habits, problem solve, manage time, and produce quality work.

Unfortunately, insufficient data were gathered to comment on the influences of geographic, demographic, and socio-economic factors.

The study inspired me to propose recommendations for practice, some of which follow:

- high school follow-up surveys
- a greater focus on writing skills in high school English classes
- teaching students how to learn in high school
- greater dialogue between high school teachers and post-secondary instructors
- the implementation of a post-secondary mentor program

As research tends to do, this study raised questions for further study, including the following:

- a longitudinal study of student transition
- a broader study of first-year students
- a comparison of high school and post-secondary marks
- a study of student transitioning from one specific high school

In conclusion, my study affirmed that various structures within high schools in Manitoba work to facilitate or to hinder the students' transition to post-secondary education. Being aware that transition is a process, and recognizing student needs, can help high schools to graduate students who will rise to the challenges of post-secondary studies.

About the Author

Ann Barbour-Stevenson (M.Ed., 2010) has worked in public education for eighteen years. During that time she has held a variety of roles including classroom teacher, guidance counsellor, research study facilitator, alternate education instructor, and career education facilitator. This research report is based on her master's degree thesis research study.

REFEREED ARTICLES

Caring for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: A Historical Overview, Current Perspective, and Future Direction

John D. Kreshewski

Abstract

This historical overview on educating students with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) has the following purposes: (a) to summarize the development of the field , (b) to discuss some of the major factors associated with children's behavioural problems and EBD, (c) to examine current educational issues, (d) to observe the place of special education, and (e) to present future options for better serving this challenging population of children and youth. It is anticipated that these options may move us forward toward a truly inclusive approach to educating students with EBD.

Behavioural issues in children are not new. In fact, we can draw on history to reference the following words attributed to Socrates in Plato's writings: "Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers." One of Socrates' greatest contributions to society was his ability to pose statements, not only to draw out discussion, but also to encourage new insight into an issue. In exploring students with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD), we often hear the litany of complaints about students and their alleged faults due to societal ills: absentee parents and the vanishing family, the deficiencies of public education, and the ravages of drugs and alcohol – all of which are held to blame for the diminished state of our students' minds and lives. In addition to exploring the historical context, this article examines current issues and proposes forward-looking options for future direction.

Development of the Field

EBD is a broad category that describes "a range of more specific perceived difficulties of children and adolescents" (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009, p. 19). The field of EBD has an interesting, albeit relatively brief, history (Gable & Bullock, 2004). The development of this field seems to be closely related to the progression of education as a whole.

Typically segregated from public schools and ostracized by society, students with EBD have been included in public schools for less than six decades (Whelan, 1999). Since EBD is a broad category commonly used in educational settings, it is critical to realize that the development of the field has its roots in history. The following chronology outlines important events relating to children with EBD in the United States, from 1799 to 2004:

- 1799 - Itard publishes his report of the wild boy of Aveyron
- 1825 - House of Refuge, first institution for juvenile delinquents in the United States, founded in New York
- 1866 - Edward Seguin - *Idiocy and Its Treatment by the Physiological Method*
- 1899 - First U.S. juvenile court established in Chicago
- 1909 - National Committee for Mental Hygiene founded
- 1922 - Council for Exceptional Children founded
- 1931 - First psychiatric hospital for children founded in Rhode Island
- 1943 - Leo Kanner describes early infantile autism
- 1946 - New York City Board of Education designates 600 schools for disturbed and

maladjusted pupils
- 1953 - Carl Fenichel founds the League School, first private day school for severely emotionally disturbed children, in Brooklyn
- 1960 - Pearl Berkowitz and Esther Rothman publish *The Disturbed Child,* describing permissive, psychoanalytical educational approach
- 1962 - Eli Bower and Nadine Lambert publish *An In-School Process for Screening Emotionally Handicapped Children*
- 1964 - Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders established as a division of Council for Exceptional Children
- 1968 - Frank Hewett publishes *The Emotionally Disturbed Child in the Classroom*
- 1978 - PL 94-142, appropriate education law for all handicapped children, including emotionally disturbed
- 1987 - National Mental Health and Special Education Coalition formed
- 1990 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amends PL 94-142
- 1997 - National Agenda for Students with Serious Emotional Disturbance proposed
- 2004 - IDEA reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(taken from Kauffman & Landrum, 2009, p. 65)

The chronology can help one to grasp the development of ideas and trends over time. Itard's *Wild Boy of Aveyron* in Europe is testament to the growing interest, as far back as 1799, in helping youngsters with mental health issues. It is well known that the treatment of persons with any type of disorder before the 19th century was often harsh and cruel. In fact, life was generally hard for most people all over the world. Much of the early work with mental health can be attributed to the benevolent will of individuals and professional groups. Edward Seguin, commonly known as the father of special education, is an example of a person who dedicated his life to helping children with disabilities. The advancements in educating students with EBD would have not been possible without the early contributions of people like Itard and Seguin. The establishment of professional groups, like the Council for Exceptional Children in 1922 and the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders in 1964, signified the progression of events that have affected the development of services for children with special needs. In the 1950s, the public schools movement was a critical point in history, when public schools assumed responsibility for "training students with disabilities" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 233). Since the terms of EBD are most often related to the school setting, the acknowledgment of the public schools in accepting the responsibility to educate all students was crucial.

Now that the school was at the forefront in the development of educating students with EBD, the dissemination of authoritative reports on how to work with the children began to take shape. The 1960 publishing of *The Disturbed Child,* by Pearl Berkowitz and Esther Rothman, is an example of researchers who studied the field of EBD in the educational setting.

Various conceptual models were developed over the latter part of the 20th century. These models directed special educators to pay varying degrees of attention to "the supposed underlying psychological disturbances or unconscious motivations of the behavior" (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009, p. 43). Moving in step with the sentiment of these concept models were intervention programs that focused on behaviour modification. These programs become very popular during this period in history, better known now as applied behavioural analysis.

Federal government initiatives also determined services for "children and adolescents with emotional and mental health needs" (Bullock & Gable, 2006, p. 8). In 1978, the United States federal government enacted PL 94-142, appropriate educational law for all handicapped children, including emotionally disturbed children. This piece of legislation served as an example of the political sentiment of the time.

On a more local front, in the late 1970s Manitoba Education and Training was given a mandate to provide "free public education to students with disabilities" (Lutfiyya & Van

Walleghem, 2001, p. 81). Even though this legislation did not come to fruition quite like it was meant to be, the event speaks to local political policy of the time. Several more legislative acts that followed in Canada and the United States have truly progressed the support for educating student with EBD.

For the next three decades, efforts to provide services to special education students in Manitoba were fuelled by the determination of individual educators and parents (Lutfivya & Van Walleghem, 2001). The results included "greater funding for a wider variety of educational options, a move from a development curriculum to a functional one, and more recently to a regular curriculum referenced approach" (Lutfiyya & Van Walleghem, 2001, p. 83). Hence, the advocacy of parents and teachers played an important role in forwarding this movement.

Perhaps the most recent and critical historic development in Manitoba took place on October 28, 2005. The proclamation of The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming), reflected Manitoba's commitment to providing all students with appropriate programming that supports student participation in both the academic and social life of schools. The inclusion of social development under this Act gave major significance to the plight of educating students with EBD.

In summary, history accounts highlight the significant contributions of professional groups, researchers, and governments. These groups have progressed the field of EBD to its current status. However, we still face numerous critical challenges for which we must seek answers.

Major Factors Associated with Children's Behavioural Problems and EBD

Today's definition of what constitutes EBD is often defined by socio-cultural expectations and subjective observations. EBD is not defined by truly developed norms. Individuals who have grown up in privileged homes, as well as individuals that have been reared in poverty, can exhibit EBD. A definition is important if we are to address the problem and provide effective interventions. The most familiar resource that is used to identify EBD is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-IV-TR*), published by the American Psychiatric Association (2000). This manual contains descriptions of specific behavioural characteristics that are associated with EBD: adjustment disorder, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and autism spectrum disorder.

The following behavioural characteristics can assist with the diagnosis of EBD:

- is more than temporary, expected response to stressful events in the environment
- difference from age, culture, or ethnic norms
- adverse effect on educational performance (academic, social, vocational or personal)
- responses to stress that are more than temporary or expected
- consistent problem in two different settings, including school
- persistent disorder despite individualized interventions
- possibility of coexistence with other disabilities
- full range of disorders of emotions or behaviour

(Kauffman & Landrum, 2009, p. 34)

We continue to search for answers as to why people behave in the way that they do. Perhaps we are looking for what or whom to blame, or maybe we are looking for a conceptual model that will guide our progress in this area. Towards this quest, several causal factors have been identified as contributing to the complex development of EBD: biological factors, family factors, school factors and cultural factors.

School factors are one possible explanation, particularly "the quality of classroom instruction, the quality of the teacher-child interaction, peer influences, and the child's social communication abilities" (Hester et al., 2004, p. 6). It has been my personal observation

through almost twenty years of teaching, that the relationship between the student and the teacher, as well as classroom instruction, is of utmost importance in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom. This observation begs the question, “Does disordered behaviour cause school failure, or is it that school failure causes disordered behaviour?” Inconsistent management of behaviour, ineffective instruction, and the insensitivity to student’s individuality, can certainly point to the major roles that school factors play in contributing to EBD.

Biological factors have great appeal as explanations for deviant behaviour, especially with the advancement of science in areas of genetics. Genetics, viral disease, brain injury, biochemical imbalances, and even temperament support the biological causation of disordered behaviour. However, it would be just as incorrect to rely solely on “biological misfortune” as it would be to rely solely on “social or cultural conditioning” (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009, p. 159) such as parental “attitudes towards education, their own school experience, and their attitudes toward appropriate school-related behaviors” (Kauffman & Landrum, p.190). These attitudes, along with well known external pressures (poverty, violence, homelessness) affecting families, can go a long way in contributing to deviant student behaviours. Thus, it seems that the co-morbidity of many causal factors is likely the best explanation in determining the causes of EBD.

Aspects of social context and culture are what school is all about for some students. We often hear comments from students that the only reason they attend school is to be with their friends. Peer groups are therefore very important to most children in school. A student’s ability to fit in or to not fit in may be a contributing factor in the development of deviant behaviours. Many young people join gangs due to the lack of positive peer relations. The social acceptance that they seek may come in many different forms; some students will do just about anything in order to gain that approval from their peers.

Culture must be considered by educators in determining sources of behavioural issues. Too often we hear students say, “I can do or say that at home – what is your problem?” Kaiser and Rasminky (2009) aptly pointed out that, “as soon as they are born, children start to acquire the skills they need to become competent adults in their own culture, and by the time they enter school they’re already well on their way” (p. 105). Thus, when school is different from home, there is a disconnect that could lead to behavioural issues.

Current Issues

Early identification and assessment are areas of current concern. It would seem logical to assume that early detection of EBD would be easy and beneficial for students, but this is not always true. For instance, when children are young, it is often hard to determine whether maladaptive behaviours are part of normal childhood. In education, we often take the “wait and see” approach with hopes that the child will grow out of the behaviour. Furthermore, we are sometimes afraid of labelling a student too early for fear of false identification and “unnecessary or unwarranted intervention” (Hester et al., 2004, p. 6). Nevertheless, we need to identify EBD as early as possible, especially because exposure to the family, the neighbourhood, the school, and societal risk factors could lead to the development of maladaptive behavioural manifestation (Sprague & Walker, 1999). If these behaviours are left unchecked, they will produce negative short-term outcomes and lead to negative destructive long-term outcomes.

Issues of assessment include the technical quality of the instruments used to assess child behaviour, and the qualifications and skills of the person conducting the assessment (Hester et al., 2004). We often use self-report questionnaires that are completed by students, teachers, and parents. Unfortunately, these measures are highly subjective and can produce varied results.

The education of antisocial and violent students is no easy task. School administrators are under a lot of pressure to keep schools safe and orderly. On one hand, they have parents and governments advocating for special consideration in disciplining students with EBD; on the other hand, they have parent groups and teachers demanding safety. Manitoba, like many provinces

in Canada, has adopted appropriate educational programming measures to guide school systems in the disciplining of students with special needs. An example of this legislation can be found in Manitoba Education's appropriate education documents.

The Place of Special Education

Inclusive education for the behaviourally disordered has been a controversial topic for over two decades and has roots in special education. Inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is perhaps one of the most controversial and diverse issues in education in the 1990s (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009). The problem lies not in including "some students with EBD" in the general classroom, but in including "all students" (Kauffman & Landrum, p. 52). Children who exhibit externalizing behaviour problems are especially difficult to place because their behaviours often interrupt the class and require a lot of the teacher's time in dealing with the behaviours.

Many placement options are used for students with EBD, ranging from regular class placement to day treatment or partial hospitalization programs. Today, many schools in Manitoba also use self-contained special classes in regular schools, with the option of mainstream classes integrated into a student's schedule for part of the day. The issues of placement are subject to many current forces that are worth mentioning. Alternative placements are very expensive and have come under attack in times of economic uncertainties. Ideological and political pressures for full inclusion are today's reality, but are we truly ready prepared for the implications of full inclusion? In their review of historical developments in educating students with EBD, Bulluck and Gable (2006) stated that "schools are struggling to deliver adequate education and supports for students with EBD who are placed in the general education classroom. Few teachers have the skills or strategies to educate them" (p. 9). This statement speaks to the possibility that there is a need for better preparation for teachers in dealing with these issues. If students are placed in a classroom with ill prepared staff, who loses the most?

Kauffman (1999) suggested that "one clear lesson we could learn from history is that unrestrained advocacy is self-defeating. More specifically, we could observe that over enthusiasm for inclusion is likely to suffer the same fate as overenthusiasm for exclusion" (p. 245). This is a bold statement, but it does imply a possible reality. If we abandon the potential benefits of educating students with EBD in a specialized environment, only to make matters worse for all learners, who interests are we serving? There is an old saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water." To comply with the postmodernist and deconstructivist philosophies of tossing the benefits of special education out "with the bath water," we may be doing more harm than good.

The issues in this field can sometimes feel insurmountable. Kauffman & Landrum (2009) suggested that "it is easy to be discouraged by the history of the treatment of children and youth with EBD. Not a single critical issue seems to have been truly resolved" (p. 63). Perhaps our expectations are not realistic when it comes to having a profound effect on the lives of students with EBD. What could be needed is the realization that things have generally improved for most students in our education systems over the past decade. Further progress will be made if we truly continue to put our best intentions forward.

Options for the Future

Supporting all students in an increasingly diverse population is a challenge for educators today. What kind of social context fosters prosocial behaviour and discourages aggressive behaviour? What strategies can we use to support behaviour and positive learning environments? We must begin "by providing clear school-wide expectations and acknowledging appropriate behaviors on a consistent basis" (Hester et al., 2004, p. 8). We need to prove that

schools have changed their passive attitudes toward student behaviour, which relied on punishment and school exclusion when behaviour exceeded poorly defined limits.

Kerr and Nelson (2010) acknowledged that "schools can no longer afford to ignore the behavioural needs of students until they reach the point that special education identification is considered or that potential threats to school safety exist" (p. 5). Many schools have responded with multi-tiered intervention programs that increase with intensity as the deviant behaviour progresses. These school-based models generally include primary preventions (universal interventions that are school wide, such as the implementation of a cell phone policy), secondary preventions (target group interventions for students at risk who did not respond to the primary intervention, such as social skill instruction), and tertiary preventions (intensive interventions that target individuals with serious problems, such as an individual behaviour plan to support a student with violent outbursts).

Early identification of students with EBD is an important consideration for the future. It is now common knowledge that treating any kind of human condition early is much more effective than remediation efforts. The same can be said of children with behavioural difficulties (Lane, Gresham, and O'Shaughnessy (2002). Students who continue to experience academic and social failure in school are often too far along a path of destruction to be assisted easily. School divisions across the country must provide strategic leadership in the areas of training and program supports, as proactive supports are much more parsimonious than traditional reactive measures.

Multi-dimensional approaches in supporting students with EBD are critical. The school must work in collaboration with multiple agencies in the community, in order to wrap services around the child in need. This concept must also include the parents of the child in the process of intervention. It would seem impossible to make real change in the area of support without addressing the "whole picture" of the child's life.

In order to address learning frustrations for students with EBD in the classroom, we must focus on academic interventions that are individualized and merged with behavioural programs. The focus should be on teaching children "to regulate their own behaviors so they are better able to control their emotional reactions, adjust to complex social situations, and deal with challenging academic and social difficulties" (Polsgrove & Smith, 2004, p. 400). This approach will empower students to chart their own course and gain a sense of self-advocacy.

An appropriate comprehensive intervention model would use functional behavioural assessment (FBA). FBA is "as a systematic process used in identifying the function or purpose of a specific misbehavior or inappropriate action" (Austin & Sciarra, 2010, p. 7). If the student support team can identify the root cause of the behaviour, then an effective intervention can be developed. Teachers, parents, and supporting personnel use certain tools to identify likely contributors (setting events, antecedents, and consequences) associated with an inappropriate behaviour and to predict the underlying causes of that behaviour.

Academic instruction is critical to the success of any student in the school system. Teachers of children with EBD "spend less time on active academic instruction and their students engage in lower rates of academic behavior" (Yell, Meadows, Drasgow, & Schriner, 2009, p. 343). These teachers may need to learn new instructional procedures and strategies in reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills, in order to design and deliver appropriate programming. More research is needed in the area of academic interventions for students with EBD. This call is imperative to the future progress of these students.

Focusing on forward-looking program interventions may be our best and most effective approach for the future. Rather than intervening late, at times of personal crisis and academic failure, and by identifying factors that may have caused students' disordered behaviours, we need to explore forward-looking interventions that are solution focused and promote the development of effective strategies that students with EBD may use to deal with future challenges in productive ways. Promoting a program of early and forward-looking physical health (Asche, 2008; Bernhardt, 2008; Ratey, 2008) and academic competence interventions

(Freeze, 2006; Freeze & Cook, 2005; Lane, 2004) may give students with EBD a chance to succeed before "the wheels fall off the cart." The goal of this approach is to make students with EBD physically and academically stronger, not to "fix" their problems. This approach to dealing with students who display characteristics of EBD has potential, but requires study to determine feasibility, efficacy, and limitations.

Attempts should be made to use quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to identify positive physical health and academic competence interventions for students with EBD, in ways that may provide inclusive pathways to success. This type of research may demonstrate viable methods to improve emotional and behavioural self-control, as well as significant academic recovery. These interventions could be applied to students with EBD in inclusive settings, with the potential of demonstrating ways to reduce the perceived need for alternative and segregated programs.

Several researchers (see Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Klem & Connell, 2004; Kreshewski, 2008; O'Rourke & Houghton, 2006) have argued that student engagement may be the main key to success for students with EBD and may have the most profound effect on their academic achievement. What may be needed are positive physical and academic interventions that give students with EBD a fighting chance to become actively engaged in school and to take responsibility for their education. Engagement and responsibility may contribute to immediate improvements in behaviour, cooperation, self-esteem, and academic achievement. Moreover, "engagement with learning may be critical to students' capacities to be lifelong learners and is likely to be predictive of their abilities to take on new challenges after they leave school" (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007, p. 13). Students' sense of involvement in their education is vital to their efforts and success.

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The Changing Roles of Special Education Teachers in the 21st Century

Joanne Bradley

Abstract

The introduction of inclusive education in Manitoba, Canada, thirty years ago, has changed the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers. These professionals are now teachers without a class, who co-teach with, and are a support service for, the regular education teacher. They have new administrative duties, due to increased responsibilities related to scheduling and paperwork. In addition, they are held responsible for the teaching of risk reduction behaviours in the inclusive setting. Special educational teachers have therefore had to reevaluate their purpose in the educational system to provide regular classroom teachers and their students with the opportunity to have the most success.

Inclusion of special needs students in the regular classroom is a philosophy that has shaped the educational system in Manitoba, Canada, for the past 30 years. Instead of serving these students by means of pull-out programs, resource rooms, and special education classrooms, we now place "students with disabilities of all ranges and types in general education classrooms with appropriate services and supports provided in that context" (Sailor, 2002, p. 13). The concept sounds simple enough in theory, but it has far-reaching implications for the special education program in a school. With the changes to the educational system, "a student with a disability is no longer only special education's responsibility: that student is the system's responsibility" (McLaughlin & Henderson, 2000, p. 57). In order to meet these changes within the context of inclusive education, special education teachers have had to change their roles and responsibilities. They have become teachers without a class, who co-teach with the regular education teacher. Their new role as a support service for the regular classroom teacher imposes new communication demands. They have also taken on administrative duties, due to the increased responsibility of scheduling and paperwork. Finally, they are responsible for ensuring that risk-reduction behaviours are taught in the inclusive setting.

Special education teachers may feel confused and unclear about their role as teachers, with the shift to inclusion. When teachers have classes of their own students, they know what is expected. They set up the rules and have expectations set for their students. When special educators taught in an isolated setting, they taught the students with learning difficulties or disabilities (York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002). They created individualized education plans (IEPs) and implemented them in their own classrooms. There was no need to figure out how the special needs students were going to be included in the classroom; they already were a part of it because it was their classroom.

With the move to inclusive education, the special education teacher is still responsible for those same students, but in the role of supportive co-teacher instead of being the primary teacher (York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002). The teaching of curriculum to special education students, once the sole responsibility of the special education teacher, has become the task of the regular education teacher. Classroom teachers turn to the special education teacher to learn how to provide the best education for these students, including IEPs (Ferguson, Ralph, & Sampson, 2002; Idol, 2006; York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002). Therefore, with inclusion, the main focus is no longer just the education of children; it becomes the education of adults. This is a responsibility that has its own set of challenges.

Co-teaching can be a challenge for many people. Most teachers develop a sense of ownership of their classroom. They have it set up the way they like it, with procedures in place that work best for them. The special education teacher may feel like an invited guest in the regular classroom teacher's classroom and not share the same sense of ownership of the class, which can make sharing the responsibility of teaching awkward for both individuals (Klingner &

Vaughn, 2002). It is a case of not wanting to offend anyone or overstep boundaries that have already been firmly entrenched. Most regular education teachers do share the belief that students with learning disabilities, for example, should be educated within the regular education classroom with their peers (Idol, 2006), but the attitudes that special educators are met with many times contradict this notion. Many regular education teachers have a difficult time sharing control of their classrooms, and can have an uncooperative attitude when it comes to the idea of co-teaching (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Vlachou, 2006).

With the push toward inclusion, regular classroom teachers have no other choice but to collaborate with their special education counterparts. The special education teacher's role is not to assess the work of the regular classroom teacher. He or she provides support for the regular classroom teacher, so that the best education possible is provided to all the students. The special education teacher helps to make adaptations to lessons for special needs students, so they can have the best chance at success (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002). Taking on the role of co-teacher means that communication between the two parties is one of the most important parts of the job. Communication must be effective if both teachers are going to be able to provide the best educational opportunity to all students.

Communication is one of the biggest factors in ensuring that inclusion will be successful. Special educators may have difficulty finding time to interact with other staff members (Ferguson et al., 2002; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; York-Barr, Sommerness, Duke, & Ghere, 2005). Planning is particularly time consuming. If special educators and classroom teachers are to be co-teachers, they need time to plan together, so that they can offer the best lessons to students. They need time to consult one another on individual students' IEP progress (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). If both teachers are not working together to ensure that IEP goals are being met, then the student becomes lost in the inclusive classroom. When specific adaptations or modifications need to be made, the special education teacher is the best resource available to the regular classroom teacher. The communication needs to happen in the least restrictive way possible, so that the relationship remains positive and intact. Therefore, special education teachers must work around the schedules of a variety of people. This scheduling becomes another responsibility for the special education teacher.

Previous to inclusion, the scheduling of the "pull-out" special educator's time was not much different from that of a regular education teacher. Timetables were designed, and the teachers filled them in to schedule pull-out time to work with specific students (York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002, p. 179). In an inclusive setting, scheduling becomes much more difficult. For example, if a particular special needs student requires some kind of one-on-one support during a pull-out time, the special education teacher must work around a variety of schedules and issues – is it convenient for all students? will it conflict with the regular classroom schedule? will it conflict with what the regular classroom teacher has planned? will it take the student away from subjects that are important to, or favored by, the student? (Vlachou, 2006; York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002). It is no longer just the special education teacher's timetable that needs to be adjusted and worked around, but the timetables of all teachers working with these students. Time is a precious commodity in a school year, so to start requesting more time of others becomes a challenge. The key for this partnership between teachers is flexibility (Kemper Cohen, Gale, & Meyer, 1994). If both teachers are not flexible with each other's schedules and styles then the partnership will fail, and in the end they will have failed their students. With all of these schedules and students in various classes, moving in many different circles, the issue of tracking their success becomes difficult. It is not only the administrative responsibility of scheduling that presents itself as a challenge; the paperwork involved in tracking the students' success becomes overwhelming.

The special education teacher in an inclusive setting must now deal with an ever-increasing amount of paperwork (Murdock, 2010; York-Barr et al., 2005), which becomes larger based on the need to update IEPs and assess students (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). The IEP is the most important document used by both the special education teacher and the regular classroom

teacher to track the success of the special needs students. Before inclusion, a special education teacher could write a student's IEP on an annual basis and measure the students' success toward attaining the goals of their IEP in an informal way (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). In the inclusive classroom, the IEP must be updated on a more regular basis, to coincide with the demands of reporting to parents. It is not uncommon these days to re-evaluate the goals of a student's IEP on a quarterly basis, which means rewriting goals just as frequently (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). Special educators report spending many hours at home in the evenings and on weekends working on IEP-related paperwork (York-Barr et al., 2005). When teachers have to spend more time completing paperwork, time that was previously available for teaching is sacrificed (Ferguson et al., 2002; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). Many people decide to become teachers because they have a passion for the children and enjoy watching them have success. This passion is special for special educators because they strive to see success both in academic and social aspects of the student's education.

Logically, special educators know that they are responsible for the academic education of special needs students, but there is a branch of education that is not academic. Education is not all reading and writing, math and science. There is also the whole area of education that deals with behaviours and social skills. Special needs students are more likely to participate in risky behaviours such as alcohol and/or drug abuse, and unsafe sexual behaviours (Lamorey, 2010). Teaching the dangers of these risky behaviours is crucial to ensure the safety and classroom learning of special needs students. Students who come to school under the influence of a narcotic, for example, are at risk academically as well as physically. In secondary schools, guidance counsellors are responsible for teaching these functional skills, but in the younger grades this teaching falls into the hands of the special education teacher in cooperation with the regular classroom teacher. This collaborative approach provides an opportunity for the students to receive the information at the appropriate instructional level, and then apply it both in the regular classroom and in their daily life situations (Lamorey, 2010). If teachers are going to continue to have success with these students in their classroom, they must deal with these risky behaviours and give students the information to make well-informed decisions for a lifetime.

In order for inclusion to be successful for both the child and the school in general, special education teachers become co-teachers who support the regular education teachers and communicate with them on the progress of special needs students. They also complete the administrative duties that come with inclusion, such as scheduling and paperwork. Finally, they ensure that not only academics, but social and at-risk behaviour prevention, are taught to the special needs students. These new roles and responsibilities have arisen because of the shift to inclusive education. It is no wonder that "special educators are more likely to depart the profession of teaching than any other teaching group" (York-Barr et al., 2005, p. 194). The demands placed on these individuals are overwhelming. It is the reward of seeing the special education students thrive in the school environment, with their peers, that makes it all worthwhile. Special education teachers have a special job: preparing the special needs student to thrive in the world outside the classroom. With the collaboration of the regular education teacher, this goal can be met and students can achieve success.

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A Collaborative Approach: Emphasizing Student Responsibility and Trained Teachers, to Increase Success of the Adolescent with ADHD

Tracy Maffenbeier

Abstract

Success for adolescents with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in high school involves providing supports to overcome the social deficits and impulse behaviours that characterize ADHD. Positive supports, provided by knowledgeable teachers regarding ADHD and others interested in the students' well-being, include a well-balanced intervention plan, comprised of pharmacology and proactive strategies to prevent and manage deficit behaviours. Success, in terms of improved overall functioning, is marked by improved academic and social performance.

Teaching adolescents with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) requires managing behaviours so that in the short-term the daily functioning of students improves, and in the long-term students become self-reliant and successful learners. It is beneficial to consider the issues regarding adolescents with ADHD and the development of responsible autonomy in this process, in order to help students succeed. A principal consideration is the high school setting: high schools often provide a less supportive environment at the time when adolescents with ADHD require greater support. Moreover, successful management of behaviours associated with ADHD requires teachers who are knowledgeable about ADHD and current practices. It is important to provide in-service training to address deficits in these areas, as teachers' beliefs and knowledge of ADHD affect how students behave and the outcome of the intervention. In addition, communication and collaborative planning between educators and various professionals, parents, and the adolescent are essential, as this supportive environment facilitates the integrating of ideas and promotes similar and realistic goals. Finally, teachers should consider best practices, including medical and behavioural interventions, when developing an intervention plan. Interventions should be proactive in nature, focusing on preventing and reducing behaviours, and supporting responsible decision making. A combination of these components is essential for effectively managing behaviours associated with ADHD, while supporting responsible autonomy.

Issues Regarding Adolescents with ADHD and Responsible Autonomy

Teaching adolescents with ADHD to become self-reliant – to possess a general understanding of the disorder and act using responsible autonomy – is difficult but necessary (Litner, 2003; Wolraich et al., 2005). This task is difficult because of the characteristics associated with ADHD and the challenges of the high school structure (Litner, 2003). Students with ADHD often lack the ability to function independently in the classroom (Gardill & DuPaul, 1996). They have weak organizational and planning skills, but these deficits are usually not accounted for in the high school setting (Litner, 2003). Also, students with ADHD often find the demands of high school overwhelming: these include increased curricula, multiple classrooms, and varying expectations from numerous teachers. Thus, the structure of the high school and the characteristics of students with ADHD are factors that obstruct the development of self-reliant students.

It is necessary to help teenagers with ADHD increase self-awareness and to develop responsible autonomy, as their deficits in behaviour often create academic and social problems. These adolescents often struggle academically and have an increased risk of obtaining substandard grades and dropping out of school (DuPaul & White, 2005). As well, adolescents with ADHD struggle socially. They tend to gravitate to students with marginal behaviours: the

result of a history of poor social skills, peer rejection, and social isolation, combined with the increased need for friendship (Litner, 2003). In addition, adolescents with ADHD have an increasing need for control; they typically have difficulties with adult authority, and are more skilled at disregarding parent requests (Litner, 2003; Wolraich et al., 2005). These concerns are illustrated in Cole's story: a story of a teenage boy with ADHD whose poor choices resulted in drug use and subsequently dropped out of high school (Mooney & Cole, 2000, pp. 55-56). In his story, Cole reflected on his drug use in high school as a means of taking control. This story illustrates the urgent need for adolescents with ADHD to develop greater self-knowledge and responsible autonomy for their success. Although it is difficult to teach students to be self-reliant, it is necessary for their success at school and overall well-being.

Importance of Trained Teachers

Teacher factors, which include their perspective on ADHD regarding behaviours and interventions, affect the behaviour of students with ADHD (Sherman, Rasmussen, & Baydala, 2008) and the success of the intervention (Pfiffner, Barkley, & DuPaul, 2006). These factors have important implications regarding in-service training for teachers. Teachers' beliefs concerning ADHD, in terms of their attitudes about disruptive behaviours and inclusion, are important considerations in a successful intervention. Teachers tend to view behavioural problems associated with ADHD negatively (Kos, Richdale, & Hay, 2006). Unfortunately, these attitudes create a cycle of negativity that is hard to disrupt: negative attitudes from teachers, as a result of negative behaviours associated with the disorder, beget more negative behaviours (Exley, 2008). In addition, residual beliefs regarding inclusion result in teacher practices that emphasize managing discipline problems without examining the environment and corresponding pedagogy (Graham, 2008). In Cole's story, educators regarded his disorder as being a problem from "within," with this bias resulting in self-blame and eventually self-destruction concerning school (Mooney & Cole, 2000). Undoubtedly, residual notions of inclusion influenced this downward spiral. Hence, residual notions of deviance and inclusion create negative environments that affect the behaviours of the adolescent with ADHD and impede the success of the intervention.

Teachers' knowledge and attitudes about ADHD are important when considering the success of the intervention (Pfiffner et al., 2006). Effective interventions require teachers who are willingly engaged and knowledgeable. A study of 149 teachers compared teachers' knowledge of ADHD concerning the symptoms and the diagnosis with general information including basic facts and current treatment strategies (Sciutto, Terjesen, & Bender Frank, 2000). Research participants revealed that teachers had a basic understanding of the symptoms and diagnosis of ADHD, with a poor understanding of general knowledge. These results have important implications, since resistance to the intervention may be related to insufficient knowledge regarding ADHD (Pfiffner et al., 2006).

Considering the implication of teacher factors, teachers require increased knowledge of ADHD including information regarding general facts and current practices (Kos et al., 2006; Pfiffner et al., 2006). Advocates for children and adults with ADHD support this belief, stating that opportunities for all students must be available by having standards for all provinces, which includes providing access to special education resources and appropriately trained educators, in order to ensure that students reach their full academic potential (Center for ADHD/ADD Advocacy, 2010). An empirical study of the efficacy of in-service training of teachers regarding ADHD indicated that in-servicing was useful in acquiring general knowledge, as teachers showed an increase in knowledge, but was insufficient for the implementation of behavioural management strategies (Jones & Chronis-Tuscano, 2008). These results indicate that more extensive training is needed to alter the behaviours of teachers in the classroom. Therefore, a one-day workshop is adequate for acquiring general knowledge of ADHD, and additional supports from professionals with ongoing consultation are recommended for a behavioural

modification program (Pfiffner et al., 2006). Increasing teachers' knowledge regarding ADHD will change their beliefs and improve the success of the intervention.

Structure and Role of a Collaborative Team

A collaborative team of stakeholders engaged in behavioural planning is an important component when considering effective interventions for ADHD (Cook, 2005; Rief, 2003). When forming a collaborative team, educators need to consider the composition of the team and the corresponding roles of its members (Janney & Snell, 2003). A collaborative team should be diverse in nature, comprised of various stakeholders who have a wide-ranging set of skills and knowledge. A collaborative team is best comprised of special and general education teachers, educational assistants, a psychologist, and a building administrator. In addition, other related service providers should be included for added supports, as required. A collaborative team also needs to incorporate the familial aspect of the adolescent, which consists of the student and his or her parents (Janney & Snell, 2003; Pfiffner et al., 2006). Parents' involvement is critical, as they understand their child best (Pfiffner et al., 2006; Salend & Sylvestre, 2005). Thus, an effective collaborative team for managing ADHD should be comprised of the adolescent, his or her family, and professionals who share an interest in the well-being of the adolescent.

The role of the collaborative team can be described as determining and evaluating behavioural and learning goals, in the process of planning and supporting behaviours (Janney & Snell, 2003). Effective interventions involve initial and ongoing planning with regular consultations between professional and familial persons (Pfiffner et al., 2006). In this planning process, stakeholders lay the ground work by meeting to ascertain needs and establish goals prior to the intervention. Regularly scheduled meetings provide opportunities for stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the progress toward these goals. Success is improved when the adolescent with ADHD is actively involved in this process (Litner, 2003; Pfiffner et al., 2006); however, adolescents often respond with learned indifference, as a result of years of "pseudo inclusion" (Litner, 2003, p. 152). Therefore, effective collaborative planning requires regular consultations from all stakeholders who have a shared commitment.

Regular consultations also provide supports for the adolescent, parents, and teachers. Clinicians who are specialists in the field of exceptional children provide teachers with ongoing instruction and training regarding ADHD (Pfiffner et al., 2006). In addition, professional staff provides the adolescent with much needed support and guidance (Litner, 2003). The adolescent often finds himself or herself overwhelmed, as goals are often unsuccessful and need to be re-established. Specialists agree that regular consultations are effective for this process – in general, every two weeks (Janney & Snell, 2003; Pfiffner et al., 2006; Wolraich et al., 2005). In conclusion, effective interventions include a well-rounded collaborative team that works together to establish and monitor goals in a supportive environment.

Best Practices

A multimodal approach for ADHD that includes both medical and behavioural interventions has been shown to be effective for improving student performance (DuPaul & White, 2005; Hoffman, 2010; Rief, 2003). In practical terms, however, medication use is often inconsistent. Consequently, intervention plans should include behavioural interventions that provide positive supports for behaviours, in concurrence with pharmacology. These interventions should include a balance of antecedent-based and teacher-contingent strategies that focus on preventing and managing disruptive behaviours associated with ADHD.

Medication is an important component of treatment protocol, as it has been found to diminish impulsive behaviours and improve attention and productivity (DuPaul & White, 2005). However, medication is not without considerations. Medication use is often inconsistent, whereby steady declines are observed after peak use in the fourth grade (Hoffman, 2010).

These attrition rates may be linked to the following factors: unpleasant side effects, parents' unease with medical interventions, and the child's own reticence toward drug use. In addition, optimal clinical effects of medication depend on the type of medication used and the time of administration (Kollins, Barkley, & DuPaul, 2001). Drug release has important implications for drug administration, as strategic administration may be useful to optimize peak effects. It is important for educators to work with parents and medical professionals to maximize the effects of medication (Barry & Haraway, 2005).

Behavioural interventions for managing ADHD behaviours are an important component when considering treatment protocol, as they provide effective strategies for managing student behaviours (Gardill & DuPaul, 1996). It is essential that teachers use best treatment protocol, and select a combination of behavioural strategies, which include antecedent-based, consequent-based, and self-management strategies, in order to achieve optimal performance results (DuPaul & Weyandt, 2006). When selecting strategies, it is important to consider that teacher-administered consequences and antecedent-based interventions are recognized as effective strategies for regulating behaviours of ADHD (Pfiffner et al., 2006); however, self-management interventions, which requires the student to monitor, evaluate, and administer rewards for goal completion, has drawbacks associated with it, and should be used in conjunction with teacher-administered consequences (Pfiffner et al., 2006). Consideration of these factors results in the most effective treatment plan.

A balanced approach should be used when designing treatments. Equal importance should be given to antecedent-based interventions and teacher-administered consequences (DuPaul & Weyandt, 2006). Antecedent-based strategies are designed to prevent problematic behaviours by implementing changes to the learning environment and the learning task (DuPaul & Weyandt, 2006; Gardill & DuPaul, 1996; Pfiffner et al., 2006). Manipulations to the antecedents are important, as they have been found to influence achievement by increasing the attention of students with ADHD (Gardill & DuPaul, 1996). Providing a structured classroom, which include a functional seating plan and predictable rules and expectations, is a fundamental practice that illustrates antecedent-based interventions (Cook, 2005; Pfiffner et al., 2006). As much behaviour is known, a proactive approach consisting of anticipating and preventing problematic behaviour is effective; however, breakdowns in behaviour obstruct this process (Litner, 2003).

Teacher-administered consequences provide strategies for managing problematic behaviours associated with ADHD, after the fact. A more precise explanation might be the following: teacher-administered strategies provide positive supports for effective handling of problems, which involve responding to a problematic behaviour in an attempt to facilitate adapted responding, decreasing the likelihood of the behaviour (DuPaul & Weyandt, 2006; Gardill & DuPaul, 1996). A variety of teacher-consequence strategies improves the efficacy of adaptive responding (Gardill & DuPaul, 1996). These strategies may involve daily behavioural management techniques such as contingent teacher-attention; however, more serious behavioural problems may require a more structured technique such as time-outs from positive reinforcements (Gardill & DuPaul, 1996; Janney & Snell, 2003; Pfiffner et al., 2006). Complexities of behaviours determine compensations by teachers. Thus, a balance of strategies is effectual in the handling of behaviours associated with ADHD.

In conclusion, an effective intervention plan should include medical and behavioural interventions. Effectual monitoring of pharmacology is important to the success of the intervention and includes considering issues regarding adherence and administration. In addition, a variety of carefully selected behavioural interventions supports behaviours and enhances pharmacology. Finally, equilibrium of strategies focusing on preventing and reducing deficit behaviours associated with ADHD enhances the efficacy of the intervention.

Conclusion

Effective interventions involve considering the dynamics of the adolescent with ADHD and the effects of the unstructured high school environment. Increased risk-taking behaviours and an increased need for control are critical factors in this domain. Implications for high school educators are serious, as these matters impede responsible autonomy and self-reliant behaviours. Teachers' negative beliefs and lack of knowledge regarding ADHD are also obstructions in this process. Effective interventions require teachers who are knowledgeable about ADHD and current practices; thus, deficits in these areas need to be addressed with ongoing in-servicing. In addition, collaboration is essential for an effective intervention. A diverse team comprised of relevant professionals, the adolescent, and his or her parents is crucial, as diversity encompasses a wide range of skills and knowledge. These attributes are important, as ongoing consultations direct and support stakeholders in behavioural planning and goal setting. Finally, an effective treatment plan should be two fold and include medical and behavioural interventions. Inconsistencies in pharmacology use necessitate a well-monitored medical intervention. As well, a variety of positive behavioural strategies should be used to complement the use of pharmacology. These strategies should focus on preventing and reducing deficit behaviours with a proportional selection of each type. In conclusion, effective management of the behaviour of adolescents with ADHD requires the amalgamation of these factors; positive results include improved daily functioning and, over time, a movement to self-reliant and responsible autonomy toward learning. This is no small task, as adolescents with ADHD often experience failures and setbacks; however, improved daily functioning reinforces positive choices and behaviours, and is a step closer to responsible autonomy.

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Differentiating Instruction for Students with Exceptionalities

Janna Kehler

Abstract

Student populations in classrooms today are continually becoming more diverse. Teachers are able to meet the needs of student diversity through a variety of differentiated instruction methods and individualized education plans. The population of students with exceptionalities has also increased significantly. Common student exceptionalities include emotional behavioural disorders, anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, and Asperger syndrome. Providing clear outcomes, opportunities for collaborative learning, and hands-on activities will benefit all students with exceptionalities. These students will have more success, in school, if individualized education plans are created and differentiated instruction methods are developed.

Today in our classrooms, we are dealing with a more diverse student population than ever before. Not only is the student population more diverse, but the number of students coming into classrooms today with exceptionalities has increased significantly. Common student exceptionalities in classrooms today include emotional behavioural disorders, anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, and Asperger syndrome. Differentiated instruction can be incorporated through the planning of individualized education plans (IEPs) for exceptional students (Landrum & McDuffie, 2010). It has become part of teachers' regular planning to prepare more than one lesson for a specific topic to be studied, especially in science, because there is a heavy focus on science content that may be difficult to understand. In science, differentiated instruction may be incorporated through collaborative assignments, hands-on activities, and lab activities. Using a variety of differentiated instruction methods and providing clear outcomes further students' understanding of the learning goals required to meet curricular outcomes (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). When applying differentiated instruction methods, teachers are able to meet the needs of the diverse student populations in today's classrooms.

Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

Students who are dealing with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) may be some of the most challenging students facing teachers in the classroom. Students with emotional behavioural disorders often find being successful in high school difficult. Failure to complete high school will highly affect their role of becoming productive adults in society (Kortering & Christenson, 2009). Typical problems for students with EBD include disruptive, noncompliant behaviour, and an effort to take control of the classroom, which may lead to poor academic performance (Nahgahgwon, Umbreit, Liaupsin, & Turton, 2010). It is important to develop a specific type of IEP, called a behavioural intervention plan (BIP), for students with EBD so that disruptive behaviour will be limited. Teachers in science classrooms have noticed that these students will excel at lab activities when paired with focused students. Science lab activities give students opportunities to take control of their learning. Students with EBD benefit from "choice assignments," because they may take control of their learning by choosing a topic of interest. The "tic-tac-toe" method is designed for choice assignments, whereby the students can pick from different options of written, visual, and oral presentation (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Using differentiated instruction to provide opportunities for these students to be successful in school will encourage positive behaviour in the classroom.

Students with EBD who find school difficult often benefit from a personalized BIP that identifies problematic behaviour. Functional-based interventions include identifying disruptive

behaviours, directing instruction on replacement behaviours, and developing a school-wide discipline routine (Nahgahgwon et al., 2010). Through the development of a BIP, disruptive behaviours may be discussed, replacement behaviours may be identified, consequences may be determined, and positive methods of differentiated instruction may be provided. The BIP also enables schools and teachers to implement a consistent discipline routine. Educators want to eliminate disruptive behaviours that interfere with learning, and promote positive behaviours wherein the student is actively engaged (Nahgahgwon et al., 2010). Functional-based intervention increases students' on-task behaviour between 70% and 90% of the time (Nahgahgwon et al., 2010, pp. 548-550). In order for students with EBD to be successful, a BIP should be in place and implemented school wide.

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders may be easily overlooked in the classroom, because these students tend to be shy, withdrawn, and quiet. About 2% to 27% of students are diagnosed with anxiety disorders (Mychailyszyn, Mendex, & Kendall, 2010, p. 106). Two common anxiety disorders in schools today are generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and social phobia (SP). Students with GAD are often concerned excessively about school performance (Mychailyszyn et al., 2010). Developing an IEP to share with teachers, which includes sources of anxiety and positive differentiated instruction methods, will improve school performance. In science, differentiated instruction is important because it is a challenging subject for many students. Teachers may limit anxiety for students by introducing the scientific vocabulary necessary to be successful in more difficult assignments. Directly involving students in their learning through conferencing may ease anxiety, because the students are aware of their progress in the class. Although teachers may easily overlook students with GAD, it is important to differentiate instruction in a way that the students' anxiety may be limited.

Students with SP tend to develop an intense fear of school, and are known to have sporadic attendance, which leads to poor academic performance. Students with SP often have an extreme fear of social situations arising at school, such as speaking with peers and answering questions out loud (Mychailyszyn et al., 2010). Through the use of IEPs, teachers can be made aware of students with SP. Differentiated instruction may be used so that these students have opportunities to work individually or complete different assignments to limit anxiety. If anxiety problems are not identified, students with SP may go to the extreme of not attending school (Mychailyszyn et al., 2010). Anxiety can be avoided by limiting social interaction and promoting positive interaction with peers they feel confident working with. Limiting uncomfortable situations for students with SP will hopefully decrease the anxiety, increase academic performance, and promote regular attendance.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Traditional classrooms are not arranged to provide students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) opportunities for success. Teachers have to be creative when developing lessons and use differentiated instruction to provide hands-on activities. IEPs for students with ADHD provide positive engagement strategies and a number of hands-on activities that have worked in other classrooms. Students diagnosed with ADHD tend to find school outcomes a struggle and have a hard time concentrating for long periods (Nyman et al., 2010). Since students with ADHD have such short attention spans, it may be beneficial in the classroom to have a variety of activities throughout a lesson, instead of working on one assignment (Kortering & Christenson, 2009). Teachers should incorporate at least one activity per lesson that activates the students to learn through hands-on assignments. Scaffolding lessons and pairing students with ADHD and high-achieving students will likely enhance their understanding (Watkins & Wentzel, 2008). In science classrooms, collaborative lab activities

and teacher demonstrations support positive student engagement. In different learning environments students with ADHD will benefit from collaborative activities (Watkins & Wentzel, 2008). In order for students with ADHD to be successful in the classroom, teachers must be creative when planning classroom activities.

Autism

Students with autism coming into classrooms today will have a variety of abilities and disabilities, which can be planned for through differentiated instruction. Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder that is commonly becoming part of the classroom (Gavin, 2010). Students with autism are known to have problems retaining information, difficulty socializing, and developmental delays due to language barriers (Gavin, 2010). Regular differentiated instruction is an important part of these students' success. Students with autism are able to retain information if they are actively engaged during the lesson (Carnahan, Basham, & Musti-Rao, 2009). One way to engage students is through the use of science lab activities. Students work in small groups wherein they can actively participate and discuss the lab activity. Working in groups will also support the development of socialization skills. Organization and expression of words are typical developmental delays for autistic students. Arranging curricular outcomes in a step-by-step process may make learning material easier to comprehend (Songlee, Miller, Tincani, Sileo, & Perkins, 2008). Teachers need to use varied methods of differentiated instruction, in order to meet the needs of students at various points on the autism spectrum.

Asperger Syndrome

Asperger syndrome is another type of pervasive developmental disorder that teachers often encounter in the classroom. Minimal socialization skills and a high intelligence level are characteristics of students with Asperger syndrome (Dowshen, 2008). These students will commonly be on IEPs, and differentiated instruction will be based on their needs. Since socialization skills of students with Asperger are limited, small group work is beneficial and develops socialization skills. Encouraging students to choose partners they feel comfortable working with may support the development of socialization skills (Williams, 2010). Differentiating instruction using tiered assignments offers the students opportunities to choose assignments of interest and promotes higher intelligence level opportunities. Linking curriculum outcomes to particular life experiences may maximize the level of engagement (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). In science, providing these students with opportunities to be actively involved in labs broadens learning and promotes higher academic achievement. Tailoring academic goals differently for each student is important when working with students with Asperger syndrome, since every student has different needs.

Conclusion

In classrooms today, teachers come into contact with a student population that is continually becoming more and more diverse. The number of students coming to classrooms with exceptionalities has also significantly increased. Through the use of differentiated instruction and individualized education plans, more students are achieving success in regular classrooms. Students with EBD benefit from behaviour intervention plans and functional-based interventions. Finding ways to limit anxiety in the classroom is important for students with anxiety disorders to be successful. Providing active lesson plans that promote hands-on activities and collaborative assignments enhance the engagement of students with ADHD. Students with autism are more successful when they are actively engaged in step-by-step assignments. Socialization skills for students with Asperger syndrome may be developed through small-group assignments and lab activities. Teachers have to be prepared for the diversity of students by preparing more than

one lesson for topics of study. Providing clear outcomes, opportunities for collaborative learning, and hands-on activities will benefit all students with exceptionalities. In science, lab demonstrations and activities promote differentiated instruction for all academic levels. Differentiating instruction gives students with exceptionalities a variety of opportunities for success, and enables teachers to meet the needs of the diverse student population in classrooms today.

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Educating Gifted and Talented Students: An Educational Paradigm

Kathy Byrka

Abstract

Gifted and talented children share some unique characteristics that must be understood by counsellors, and teachers. These children need to be identified in order to provide challenging education that they so desperately need. When not feeling challenged, these children report being bored, which results in feelings of exhaustion and stress. Gifted and talented children are very sensitive to their surroundings, and are often bullied by jealous students. A school that provides advanced methodologies, understanding counsellors, and educated teachers can help to reduce these problems, motivating the gifted and talented students to excel above and beyond their potential.

Understanding how gifted and talented students function and learn is critical to their success. Gifted and talented students share many characteristics and have a strong desire to be challenged. Counsellors must be very perceptive of who the gifted children are in their schools and be able to assess their needs. When teachers understand how the gifted students function and learn, they are better able to provide differentiated curriculum in order to achieve student success. School personnel need to be aware of their gifted population's unique needs and develop programs to keep these students challenged.

Qualities of a Gifted Child

Gifted children share the same characteristics as average children, but have a stronger need to achieve and fit into social situations. These children have very high expectations and want to be the best in everything, which often clouds their vision of reality and makes them highly sensitive to criticism and feelings of exhaustion (Rakow, 2005). They are more aware of their environment and are able to sense and feel more than the average person, causing them to feel anxious (Peterson, 2007). Many high achievers find that being popular and smart is difficult, because they are faced with bullying and resentment from jealous peers (Francis, 2009; Wood, 2010). For example, Ashley (a pseudonym), who attends a high school in Manitoba, is constantly being harassed because she is smart, athletic, musical, attractive, and gets along with the boys. Like other high achievers, she deals with jealous girls trying to "put her down" every day, in an attempt to bring her down to their level.

Gifted children need to excel in everything, which makes all new situations very stressful. They try to fit in with all peer groups in an attempt to figure out exactly where they belong (Rakow, 2005). Ashley has never been able to get close to anyone and finds that she is always moving from group to group. Children of this nature have to learn to accept themselves and deal with both the challenges and failures that they face, while promoting growth within themselves (Rakow, 2005). Gifted children have many needs and a vast range of abilities that require attention (Gavin et al., 2007). Some studies have found that gifted children will deal with their stress through suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, and dropping out of high school (Peterson, 2007).

In school, talented students are easily bored and show signs of depression when they are not able to advance in their studies (Rogers, 2007). Problem solving is an important part of learning for gifted children: they require advanced curriculum and need to be challenged constantly (Gavin et al., 2007; Graffam, 2006). They are self-motivated and prefer to work independently, as opposed to regular learners (Rogers, 2007). Ashley chooses not to work in groups anymore, so she can avoid dealing with the lack of effort produced by others. However,

acceptance from peers often outweighs the academic need to succeed (Francis, 2009). Many gifted children appear to function and fit in the same as other children do; however, they are often either overwhelmed or disengaged and feel stressed about peers and school, especially when they can not advance in their studies.

Role of the Counsellor

Counsellors are aware of many student risk factors, but they very rarely perceive the risk factors of a gifted learner (Peterson, 2007). A counsellor's success with a gifted and talented student relies on a recognition of giftedness itself (Wood, 2010). If a counsellor fails to identify who the gifted learners are, problematic behaviour may be the result. This behaviour is due to boredom and lack of motivational and challenging classes for the students to enrol in (Peterson, 2007). Counsellors play a big role in helping gifted learners in intangible areas such as self-acceptance and self-esteem (Wood, 2010). Gifted students are often set apart from others and need a counsellor to help them understand themselves as gifted. Counsellors must be fluent in the developmental aspects of giftedness, such as asynchrony, excitement for learning, intensity, need to achieve, need for mental stimulation and comprehension, desire for precision and/or perfection, moral awareness, and introversion (Wood, 2010). Counsellors can determine giftedness through Clinical Assessment of Behaviour (CAB) tests to determine students' level of cognitive functioning (Bracken & Brown, 2008). Once they have discovered the gifted student, it is important for school counsellors to assist gifted learners with their self-doubt and unrealistic perfectionism in their academics, and to help them deal with the stress that they put upon themselves (Wood, 2010). Overall, the goals of a counsellor should be to identify the gifted students' fear of failure and need to be perfect, aid students in finding compatible peers, and assist them with self-expectations.

Role of the Teacher

School districts must be proactive toward gifted education, and provide teachers with the necessary training for success (Rogers, 2007). School districts have to provide proper programs, train educators, and identify subjects that will be selected in the gifted program. It is critical that the teachers of gifted learners are well-trained (Graffam, 2006). If teachers are not properly trained, the gifted learner is often at the mercy of that teacher who becomes overwhelmed by the overload of differentiated instruction (Rakow, 2007). As a result, the students do not meet their academic needs. Differentiated instruction is important for teachers to achieve success with gifted learners (Graffam, 2006). If teachers are not aware of how to teach gifted learners, they run the risk of not recognizing who the gifted learners are, and differential learning is not as effective. When gifted learners are not motivated in the classroom, and are forced to learn the same material every year, problems arise due to disengagement (Rogers, 2007). In past years, Ashley sometimes felt that she did not need to attend certain classes, and she was very bored in a class that continually addressed the needs of the low achievers. If she missed one week, she still ended up being ahead of the entire class. She came to the point where she did not even want to go to school. Gifted education in schools therefore requires proper teacher training.

Students who are taught differentiated curriculum make noticeable gains (Gavin et al., 2007). Accelerating the curriculum one or two grade levels results in a stimulating and challenging classroom that keeps gifted learners challenged and free from boredom (Wood, 2010). Teaching gifted learners involves teaching the curriculum at a faster, more advanced pace that is two or three levels above grade level (Graffam, 2006). Gifted learners who are challenged and given opportunities to advance in their learning can therefore increase their achievement levels from one to three years of growth (Rogers, 2007). Teachers need to excite these students and have them look "outside of the box," beyond the pages of curriculum

(Graffam, 2006, p. 123). Student growth will increase yearly, assuming that challenges are consistently provided at advanced rates (Rogers, 2007). Students are more intense on learning and achieving when they are self-directed and under the strict guidance of a well-trained teacher. Teacher success depends on the ability to understand gifted students and acquire the skills needed to instruct them (Graffam, 2006).

Methodologies

Advanced classes, cluster grouping, acceleration, pull-out, and compacting are some options to assist gifted learners. These learners excel academically when placed with similar students in advanced differentiated classrooms (Rogers, 2007). The exchange between individual learning and group learning works well for gifted learners, as the learning process is not slowed down (Graffam, 2006). When Ashley was placed in an advanced math class, she found that learning was much easier, since the learning process was not stalled by low achievers. When curriculum is compacted, students learn at a faster pace and become more excited with content. This type of learning, in turn, results in positive attitudes and an increase in performance (Rogers, 2007). Regular classroom teachers often are not qualified and do not have the resources or motivation to implement a program for gifted learners. Curriculum must be delivered to gifted learners at a consistent rate in order for them to succeed without being bored (Rogers, 2007). Treating gifted learners as professionals, and providing an option for advanced learning, have been effective tools for success (Gavin et al., 2007).

Cluster grouping is another option, whereby small groups of high achievers are put together to learn advanced work (Rakow, 2007). Students can also learn through self-directing their own curriculum, and developing their own standards and goals to advance their knowledge (Rogers, 2007). The success of one school, The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY), is attributed to programs that are tailored to the high intellectual abilities of gifted children (Ybarra, 2005). Options for gifted learners include grade acceleration, early entrance to kindergarten, international baccalaureate courses, academic acceleration, grade skipping, and pull-out groups for gifted learners (Rogers, 2007). Pull-out programs that provide challenging curriculum can be effective and often have better instruction with a qualified instructor). Whether schools use cluster grouping or separate programming, it is imperative that the school and the educators determine what approach is best suited for their gifted and talented population, and have well-trained professionals and programs in place.

The programs that exist outside of the regular classroom seem to more beneficial for both teachers and gifted students. Teachers are generally better trained and do not feel as exhausted offering differentiated instruction to their students, who in turn reap the benefits of an accelerated and challenging learning environment. As a result, the students are more excited to learn and have a better attitude toward their own learning (Rogers, 2007). Therefore, it is significant for teachers to assess students who are gifted and then provide the programming that will inspire them to excel (“No Child,” 2010).

Conclusion

Gifted students, although unique and talented, tend to encounter problems with bullying, boredom, and underachievement. However, with understanding counsellors, educated teachers, and challenging curriculum, these problems can be reduced. Responsive teachers and counsellors play an important role in identifying gifted children’s mixed feelings of what exactly is expected of them at school and home, where they can feel accepted and enjoyed.

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Second Language Learning in the 21st Century Classroom

Heather Scholz

Abstract

Students today are digital learners.The 21st century has provided many new technologies that teachers and students have access to in their classrooms. This article examines different technologies and ways they can be used to develop linguistic and communicative competencies for the second language learner. Students are eager to use technologies that extend their learning beyond the walls of the classroom into the global community. The future of learning is being shaped by the digital revolution and it is important that teachers recognize the need for curriculum to be delivered in new ways that will personalize learning for their students.

Today's classrooms are very different from those a few decades ago. Students no longer respond to traditional teaching methods, textbooks, and lectures in the same way as previous generations (Rosen, 2010). Students are "experiencing the world through technology in a way that their parents and teachers never did" (Eaton, 2010, p. 16). Collaborative and personalized learning models offer opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning. As students become more engaged and motivated to learn, the teacher's role changes to that of a facilitator. Second language learners also benefit from a shift in the learning environment. They no longer want to learn grammar, memorize verb conjugations, and write notes about culture. Twenty-first century students are eager to use interactive technologies that software programs and SMART Boards™ provide, in order to improve their linguistic and communicative competencies. Culture is a central component in language learning and students yearn to reach out to the world, using social networking and videoconferencing to connect to people around the globe (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Technologies available in the 21st century offer many benefits to second language learners.

Computer technologies support collaborative learning. Collaborative learning entails students working together in a cooperative environment to discuss and share ideas, and to assess their work. Collaborating with others boosts creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Katz & Rimon, 2006). Some technologies offer the unique opportunity of communicating with others across place and time (McNeal & van't Hooft, 2006). Students who have access to social networking technologies or videoconferencing are able to work in partnership with others who live in different cities or countries. Inquiry-based learning involves a significant amount of collaboration as students explore answers to large questions. Researching and collaborating are arduous tasks without the aid of technology. As much as technology supports collaborative learning, it also encourages personalized learning.

Personalizing learning is one of the main initiatives for educators in Alberta. It involves "engaging learning opportunities that meet students' diverse learning needs, through flexible timing and pacing, in a range of learning environments with learning supports and services tailored to meet their needs" (Alberta Education, 1995-2010). The objectives of personalized learning can be met through the aid of technology. Many students are aware of their learning styles and are motivated to learn when they can choose topics that are relevant and of interest to them. For example, there is software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking ™ that will convert text into speech for students who are auditory learners. Visual learners would benefit from using software that displays images and graphics. A SMART Board gives students the option to learn about, design, and present projects using a hands-on approach. Technology supports personalized learning through the use of software, but also enables students to progress at a pace that suits their needs (Alberta Education, 1995-2010). Teachers are finding ways to integrate technology in their classrooms; however, students are taking more ownership of learning when given the opportunity to use technologies (Koszalka & Ntloedibe-Kuswani, 2010).

The personalized learning approach used by many educators in Alberta offers students a model in which they can learn in a variety of learning environments and in collaborative relationships.

The teacher's role in 21st century classrooms is shifting to that of a facilitator (Teo, Chai, Hung & Lee, 2008, p. 165). A facilitator is someone who creates opportunities for students to learn. If the teacher provides a safe classroom environment, students will be more inclined to take risks. Using technology "disrupts the traditional paradigms of teacher directedness in favour of personalized approaches where learners engage their own competencies and resources while regulating their own learning" (Koszalka & Ntloedibe-Kuswani, 2010, p. 143). When students are focused on their learning, teachers talk less, and students are more inclined to work with their peers. This interaction often leads to students' understanding and retaining more information. Integrating technology can result in a shift to more student-centered instruction (Colburn, 2000). Facilitated instruction, combined with the use of various technologies, is valuable when teaching a second language.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is not a method, but student-centered learning materials for students learning a second language (Gündüz, 2005). There are many ESL software programs that meet the criteria of ideal CALL, including ELLIS™, SpellIt!™, and English Discoveries.™ Some features of these software programs include interactive picture dictionaries, spelling and grammar checks, and a thesaurus. There are programs for improving spelling, phonics skills, grammar, sight word vocabulary, and verbal communication ("English Discoveries," 2010). There are also many adaptive learning programs that take into account a student's age, native language, current location, or skill level in order to assess linguistic proficiency accurately and provide feedback (Xu & Bull, 2010). Students may practise writing or word processing, and read computer books with interactive stories. As students play games or complete modules, immediate feedback is given. Authenticity is very important to the second language learner (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). ESL software programs include the use of authentic photos, sound, video, and dialogue such as telephone conversations and radio programs. Students also have the opportunity to speak, record their own voices, and match them to native-speaker models ("English Discoveries," 2010). Reasons for using CALL include individualization, interaction, motivation and experiential learning; however, CALL should be used only to supplement face-to-face language instruction.

Social networking can play a positive role in students' achieving the goals of the second language learning curricula. Social networking is made possible because of the increase of affordable computers, and handheld devices, and availability of networked communities (Delacruz, 2008). The Alberta English as a Second Language (ESL) *Program of Studies* requires that students interact with others from a variety of cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds (Alberta Education, 1997). Although many schools have resisted the influence of social networking, educational leaders in the United States expect that "social networking will introduce students to new and different kinds of students," and they "hope social networking will help students learn to express themselves better creatively and develop global relationships" (National School Boards Association, n.d., p. 7). Students learning a second language learn best when communicating with native language speakers. The use of email, ePals and other social networking technologies, such as chatting, blogging, and visiting online communities, would enable students to communicate with others around the world while developing language and communicative competencies in their second language.

Videoconferencing offers students the chance to participate in unique learning opportunities. For example, videoconferencing enables immigrant youth to communicate with their family and friends while practicing their heritage language. Immigrant youth often do not have access to practise their heritage language, yet children who maintain use of their native language can boost their English language skills (Ngo & Schleifer, n.d.). Immigrant children may also "experience cognitive and emotional changes due to cultural shock and grief at leaving behind familiar language, culture and community" (Ngo & Schleifer, n.d., p. 30). As youth spend a great deal of time at school, it is advantageous for schools to play a leadership role in supporting

these students, ensuring that they receive the education and services they need to become citizens who can integrate into Canadian society while keeping their local dialects and culture alive. Videoconferencing would give immigrant youth a way to communicate visually with family and friends, therefore helping with the transition of moving to a new country.

Students learning a second language benefit from videoconferencing technology. This technology offers a visual mode of communication. There are many ways that students communicate nonverbally, including gesturing, varying facial expressions, making eye contact, and altering body posture. Videoconferencing technology enables students to see a person's face and "the face, in particular, signals a wide range of emotions" (Crystal, 2005, p. 6). People from different cultures may have unique facial characteristics specific to their race and it is important for students learning a second language to be able to read the subtle movements in a person's face while communicating (Crystal, 2005). In my experience, second language learners not only gain linguistic and communicative competence by speaking with Spanish-speaking students, teachers, and curriculum experts, but also gain an understanding of other cultures through videoconferencing interactions.

The SMART interactive whiteboard is a powerful support for communication and language acquisition. For example, "it provides a bridge that allows using the features of computers without breaking communication – it even supports it. Secondly, it may enhance new kinds of learning processes" (Gerard & Widener, 1999, p. 6). One benefit of using a SMART Board is that the teacher can be interacting with all students while teaching. This interaction is of key importance to facilitate conversations in the classroom. Furthermore, all students in a classroom are able to concentrate on the same piece of writing at the same time. For example, an Internet document can be read and discussed together, and opinions and ideas can be shared. The teacher can also overwrite a document to emphasize certain ways that language is used (Gerard & Widener, 1999). SMART Boards are known for their communicative capacity, but there are other effective ways of using this interactive board to facilitate learning in the second language classroom.

SMART Boards enable teachers to build vocabulary, use visual aids, and support hands-on learning. SMART Boards can be used in many ways for development of new vocabulary. Teachers can type a new word into the keyboard and it will appear on the board. They can also reinforce vocabulary by underlining, highlighting, or circling words (Gerard & Widener, 1999). Even notes can be saved or printed for future use. A second language can be more understandable if visual aids are used alongside reading or hearing words (Fishkin, 2010). Images can be quickly searched on the Internet and shown on a SMART Board. In fact, images are often used to promote conversation among students and teachers. Second language learners learn well when they can engage in hands-on activities that provide experiences in using new skills and the chance to work cooperatively with other students. Students can navigate a SMART Board themselves, providing hands-on experience that is integral to second language learning. The SMART Board is an interactive tool that offers endless opportunities for students to work with their peers while gaining competence in their second language.

Second language teachers often teach some aspects of culture as part of their courses. However, culture must be fully incorporated as a vital component of language learning (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Technologies are used in the second language classroom to build linguistic competence, but they can also be used to foster understanding of culture. Another benefit of using technologies in the second language classroom is that they –

> serve as catalysts for collaborative learning which transcends national boundaries and presents pupils with the opportunity to study cultural and identity similarities and differences, to strengthen their national identities and to appreciate the characteristics of other identities and cultures. (Katz & Rimon, 2006, p. 29)

The global citizenship outcomes that are incorporated in the Alberta Spanish Language and Culture Nine-year Program Grades 7-8-9 in the *Program of Studies* state that it is "important for students to develop skills in accessing and understanding information about culture and apply

that knowledge for the purposes of interaction and communication" (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 24). Therefore, it is important that teachers use various technologies that can assist them in integrating culture into their second language classrooms.

Technical literacy is a skill that must be taught to 21st century learners in the second language classroom. Students are eager to use technologies such as social-networking, videoconferencing, and SMART Boards, in order to collaborate and communicate with others. New software programs enable students to work at their own pace with tools to facilitate their own learning. Now is the time for schools to maximize the impact of technology (Vockley, 2008). Students learning a second language will benefit from the tools available to them in the 21st century to develop linguistic and communicative competence for the future.

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Supporting Teachers of Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

Rena Gillingham

Abstract

A significant challenge is emerging in inclusive educational settings, as teachers encounter an ever-growing number of students who demonstrate the inappropriate behaviours associated with emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD). For a number of reasons, teachers may be ill equipped to provide the necessary support to ensure academic, social, and vocational success for these students, especially in the rural areas. With the advancement of evidence-based supportive practices, it is essential that school divisions find creative and practical ways to ensure that teachers have the required support to meet the needs of students who have been diagnosed with EBD.

Amid the increasing number of diagnosed disorders affecting school-age children today, one of the most challenging to the inclusive classroom, and least addressed, is that of emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD). Students with EBD demonstrate behavioural and emotional responses that are so significantly different from their peers that they adversely affect their educational performance in the areas of self-care, socialization, academics, personal adjustments, or classroom behaviours. With dismal statistical data demonstrating highly negative long-term prospects, it comes as little surprise that students diagnosed with EBD also demonstrate significant academic deficits. Children with EBD demonstrate an array of inappropriate behaviours that are detrimental to the climate of the inclusive classroom, and where teachers are ill-equipped to manage them. The majority of these teachers respond with reactionary measures, having little time to find and implement innovative research-based programming, or access to experienced support personnel. These factors combine to create a challenge that bears further scrutiny in the educational system.

Statistical Data

Alarming data associated with EBD reveal substantial risk of failure by students, and classroom management problems for teachers. Statistically, students with EBD represent only about 2-20% of the student population, but rank third in prevalence behind speech impairments and learning disabilities for diagnosed disorders (Lane, Kalberg, & Shepcaro, 2009, p. 321; Wehman, 2006, p. 506). Furthermore, they receive lower grades, fail more courses, experience higher retention rates, score lower on competency tests, and represent the highest dropout rate of any disability category, with roughly 50% graduating (Kern, Hilt-Panahon, & Sokol, 2009, p. 21; Wehman, 2006, p. 506). In contrast, according to Education Manitoba's statistics, 79% of the general population of students in Manitoba graduated in 2008 ("Manitoba's High School," 2009, Table 1). Additionally, employment data indicate dismal rates of unemployment, 42-72%, during the first five years subsequent to graduation, and 50-60% for diagnosed adults (Lane et al., 2007, p. 135; Wehman, 2006, pp. 506-509). Likewise, students with EBD experience higher rates of involvement with the judiciary system, with more than 50% being arrested post graduation, and a rate as high as 70% for dropouts (Kern et al., 2009, p. 18; Lane et al., 2009, p. 322). These disheartening statistics for students with EBD reflect their academic deficits, which often remain inadequately addressed in the educational system.

Academic Deficiencies

Evidence links the inappropriate, externalizing behaviours of students with EBD to significant academic deficiencies, demonstrating an increase in occurrence as the students

move through the school system, particularly in the core subjects of mathematics, reading, and writing (Lane et al., 2009; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008; Wright, 2010b). For students like Barry[1] and Kirk, both of whom have only recently been re-integrated into the inclusive classroom, academic deficits make independent participation in classroom programming extremely difficult. Barry reads and writes with a five-year deficit and requires significant technological support, text-to-speech software, and supportive writing programs, in order to access and participate in grade-appropriate programming. At the same time, Kirk reads and writes at a grade-appropriate level, but the deficits in his mathematical understandings and skills regularly result in significant frustration and oppositional behaviour. Clearly, academic independence and ability are essential elements for integration. Both boys' frustrations and resulting difficult behaviours impede their integration success, and negatively affect their new classrooms.

Classroom Management

While their anticipated outcomes, both educationally and vocationally, remain dismal, the obstreperous behaviours of students with EBD profoundly affect the inclusive classroom environment, making classroom management problematic. Most teachers report managing classroom behaviour as one of their greatest challenges, citing contention with "defiant and non-compliant students" (Wright, 2010d, p. 1) as the principal antecedent of disruption in the classroom (Ruef, Higgins, Glaeser, & Patnode, 1998; Shapiro, Miller, Sawka, Gardill, & Handler, 1999). Thus, students with EBD are considered to be the most arduous students to teach (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009). Many educators consider disruptive behaviour to be highly ubiquitous, causing classroom instruction to be impaired (Wright, 2010d). Although these students represent only about 1-5% of the school population, they are responsible for more than 50% of all office referrals for behaviour and consume vast amounts of teacher and administrative time (Quinn & Lee, 2007, p. 101). For the most part, teachers feel ill equipped to manage EBD in the inclusive setting, signifying a further need for training and assistance in developing appropriate programming (Bradley, Doolittle, & Bartolotta, 2008; McCall, 2003; Shapiro et al., 1999).

Educators clearly have difficulty in managing the externalizing behaviours of students with EBD. It is also evident, when looking at students such as Barry and Kirk, that the academic deficits accompanying the EBD diagnosis provide additional barriers to success and increase the potential for inappropriate classroom behaviour. Students identified as having EBD regularly experience negative outcomes such as failing school, dropping out, and breaking the law. Therefore, educators must endeavour to alter current practices, in order to meet the needs of this particular school-age population.

Three Steps to Intervention

Three steps are necessary to address the highly individualized needs of students identified as having EBD. Initially, the literature clearly advocates the implementation of sustained, evidence-based practices, involving both universal and individualized approaches (Kauffmann, 1999). Secondly, it is imperative that experienced and highly qualified personnel are in place to support the implementation of curricular and behavioural strategies through a team approach (Jeffrey, McCurdy, Ewing, & Polis, 2009, p. 537; Sugai et al., 2000). Finally, this team approach must train, support, and encourage general education teachers to create supportive and safe working environments for students with EBD (Shapiro et al., 1999). Implementing these three steps requires an understanding of current curricular and behavioural practices commonly utilized in inclusive classrooms.

[1] In order to protect individual identities, all given names in this article are pseudonyms.

Current Practice

The current model of practice in the educational setting overwhelmingly focuses on reactive measures, such as office referrals, parental contact, classroom structural changes, classroom removal, and enforcing school codes of conduct through suspensions and expulsions (Algozzine, Christian, Marr, McClanahan, & White, 2008). Typically, these reactive measures are punitive responses to inappropriate externalizing behaviours, often resulting from academic deficits, with devastating effects on attitude, performance, and relationships (Kauffmann, 1999, p. 448; Wright, 2010c). At the same time, students with EBD generally receive only narrow adaptations to academics, such as increased time on tests and assignments. The new, researched-based models of behavioural strategies have "failed to reach the general population of students with EBD" (Kern et al., 2009, p. 18), jeopardizing their potential outcomes (Bradley et al., 2008). Since the prevailing reactive model is not meeting the needs of students with EBD, it needs to be abandoned in favour of a more proactive, early intervention model founded on research-based strategies.

Proactive Intervention

Unlike the current reactive model, it is overwhelmingly evident that early, proactive classroom intervention strategies, which "provide for both prevention and remediation efforts" (Lane, Robertson, & Graham-Bailey, 2006, as cited in Lane et al., 2009, p. 150), are the most effective (Lopes, 2005, p. 353; Poulou, 2005, p. 38). Early identification must be part of these proactive strategies because EBD is like any other developmental disorder, in that negation is unlikely if it is not identified before eight years of age (Kauffmann, 1999). The implementation of targeted, proactive strategies, particularly primary, but including secondary and tertiary prevention programs, is most likely to be successful during the early elementary years (Lane et al., 2009). Preventative strategies, such as the teaching of emotional intelligence and academic remediation, are successful not only in arresting the development of aggression and depression, but also in promoting overall child wellness and improving impulsivity, anger control, self-awareness, and the ability to solve problems (Poulou, 2005). Lastly, there is ample scientific evidence indicating that sustained, proactive and preventative measures promote positive, cost saving outcomes for students with EBD (Kauffmann, 1999). Clearly, early, proactive programming is one of the most effective research-based interventions to date.

Research-Based Interventions

The absence of research-based interventions, referred to in the literature as the "research-to-practice gap" (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009, p. 253), effectively hinders the opportunities for success for students with EBD. While programming practices presented as part of the curricula, such as self-monitoring, self-instruction, cooperative learning, reciprocal peer tutoring, and direct instruction, have been associated with positive outcomes, they rarely appear in the inclusive classroom (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009; Jeffrey et al., 2009; Shapiro et al., 1999). When curricula are differentiated and modified to focus on creating experiential links between the students and the material, students with EBD exhibit higher task engagement and productivity, and lower incidences of difficult behaviour (Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap, & Childs, 2001). Targeted, research-based interventions are effective in supporting students identified as having EBD.

Utilizing approaches designed to target all students, such as school-wide positive behavioural support (PBS), are also effective methods for meeting the needs of students with EBD. These programs include provisions for using functional behaviour assessments (FBAs) to develop comprehensive, responsive, and intensive individualized interventions for those tertiary students with EBD who do not adequately respond to the more universal approach (Quinn &

Lee, 2007; Sugai et al., 1999). Additionally, other successful programs such as video modelling, Family School Support and Treatment Team (FSSTT), and Early Intervention Service (EIS), which intervene directly with the students with EBD, are implemented only after adaptations to the school environment have not succeeded (Baker, Lang, & O'Reilly, 2009; Bradley et al., 2008; Heath et al., 2004). Although research clearly establishes the positive effect on educational outcomes, the complexities of implementing new, school-wide or targeted evidence-based interventions place unreasonable demands on the classroom teacher.

Most classroom teachers do not have the time or experience to develop and execute a behaviour plan that adequately utilizes curricular and behavioural evidence-based strategies (Kern et al., 2009; Sugai et al., 1999). These educators require additional training, modelling, and prolonged support, as well as observational feedback from personnel with access to research-based programming (Jeffrey et al., 2009). The team approach, utilizing individuals with both access to and experience with effective EBD programming, is necessary to support the general educator (Jeffrey et al., 2009; Shapiro et al., 1999; Sugai et al., 1999). Providing access to highly experienced personnel with specialized training gives classroom teachers the guidance and support needed to develop effective programming for integrated students with EBD.

Teacher Education

Insufficient training and misconceptions of teachers regularly lead to inadequate programming for students identified as having EBD (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2007). Even with collective professional development, teachers continue to require additional support from trained and experienced team members, in order to implement strategies successfully (Barth, 1990; Shapiro et al., 1999). Believing that difficult behaviours are parental issues, that these students can simply "keep up" (Valdes, Williamson, & Wagner, 1990, as cited in Eber, Nelson, & Miles, 1997, p. 594) without any extra assistance, or that they are choosing to behave inappropriately are all common classroom teacher misconceptions (Heath et al., 2006). The combination of inadequate training and unfounded misconceptions inevitably results in failure for many students with EBD.

Access to trained personnel may also correct misunderstandings about EBD and provide general educators with much-needed professional development. For example, Brandy's classroom teacher's main instructional strategy involves independent seatwork, while he repeatedly uses punishment for inappropriate behaviour during power struggles over meaningless issues, and escalates minor infractions into major outbursts. Brandy is regularly removed from class, fails many of her tests and assignments, and has a negative regard for school and her teacher. In this case, individual teacher training, observation with feedback, modelling of disengaging tactics, and an introduction to additional academic activities would help Brandy to experience some success within the classroom (Hayling, Cook, Gresham, State, & Kern, 2008; Wright, 2010a). Brandy's teacher currently lacks knowledge and understanding of the academic and behavioural strategies that would ensure her educational success.

Conclusion

It is evident that the current educational system is failing to meet the needs of students identified as having EBD. These students are failing to succeed academically, socially, and vocationally, and little progress has been made to alleviate these circumstances. Although the advancement of evidenced-based practices and interventions is continual, general educators lack the time and training necessary to bring these promising new approaches to the inclusive classroom setting (Kern et al., 2009). Other factors, including the lack of specialized personnel, teacher attitudes and misconceptions, the use of reactive and punitive measures to deal with disruptive behaviours, and student academic deficits, also contribute to the dismal outcomes of students with EBD (Bradley et al., 2008). However, as evidenced in the literature, significant

advancement has been made in the development of practices associated with positive outcomes for these students. School divisions have a responsibility to ensure the utilization of these research-proven practices.

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Teachers Matter:
Promoting Positive Outcomes for Students with ADHD

Debra Leslie

Abstract

Educators have positive power over the students they teach, including students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a common childhood disorder that affects approximately 5% of school age children. Symptoms of ADHD include deficits in attention, activity regulation, and impulse control – skills that are critical for a child's academic, social, behavioural, and emotional success. However, despite the multitude of obstacles faced by students with ADHD, positive outcomes can exist. Though the use of critical reflection, a holistic view of each child, and proactive teaching strategies, teachers can help students with ADHD achieve their true potential.

For students with *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder* (ADHD), school can be an unforgiving place. The very nature of this common childhood disorder seems a contradiction to the qualities that a successful student might present. Inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity are among the trademark features of ADHD (Kapalka, 2010; Rowe, 2010). Each symptom represents a barrier to academic, social, and emotional growth in these children (Miranda, Soriano, Fernández, & Meliá, 2008, p. 171). While ADHD is often thought of as a childhood disorder, it is important to acknowledge its persistence into adolescence and adulthood (Daley & Birchwood, 2010; Kapalka, 2010; Rowe, 2010). Recognizing the enduring nature of ADHD compels educators to consider the long-term implications for these children in their care, and seek ways to enhance conventional recommendations. Although little research has been conducted in the area of teacher factors on student success, it is an important consideration in improving the quality of life for students with ADHD (Sherman, Rasmussen, & Baydala, 2008). Humanistic and holistic teacher factors such as use of critical reflection, a central focus on the child, and deliberate use of proactive teaching approaches are vital components of promoting positive outcomes for students with ADHD.

Due to the prevalence of ADHD, the sheer complexity of the disorder, and the poor prognosis for students whom it affects, the need for alternate approaches exists. ADHD affects roughly 5% of school age children (Kapalka, 2010, p. 20; Rowe, 2010, p. 193), indicating that virtually every classroom will have at least one student with ADHD. It is estimated that approximately 50% of children with ADHD will continue to exhibit symptoms into adolescence (Young & Amarasinghe, 2010, p. 124), and many of these teens will become adults with the disorder (Daley & Birchwood, 2010; House, 2002; Rowe, 2010). However, the symptomotology reveals merely one facet of the condition. There are powerful associations between ADHD and other psychological problems, such as disruptive behaviour, internalizing, and mood disorders (Daley & Birchwood, 2010; Miranda et al., 2008). Prospects for children with ADHD are not promising. Notable indications of academic underachievement, such as grade retention, lower academic performance, and dropout rates, are frequent in teens with ADHD (Galéra, Melchior, Chastang, Bouvard, & Fombonne, 2009; Young & Amarasinghe, 2010). Adult outcomes are uninspiring, as well. Fewer adults with ADHD will complete post-secondary education than their non-ADHD counterparts (Daley & Birchwood, 2010), and the complexity of this disorder will have negative effects in the realms of their social, personal, and occupational achievements (House, 2002). Thus, a pedagogical urgency exists for educators to utilize alternate approaches, in an attempt to create more promising futures for students with ADHD.

In order to best serve their students with ADHD, teachers can engage in ongoing critical reflection of issues such as knowledge and perceptions of disability, in particular ADHD. Using critical reflection, teachers can ask themselves important questions about disability that would

allow them to imagine, plan for, and facilitate better outcomes for their students (Baglieri, 2008). This path of inquiry can lead to an enhanced self-awareness of what one deeply understands about ADHD, and what still needs to be learned. Critical reflection can bring an increased consciousness with regards to existing biases, pre-conceived notions, and judgements about the disorder. In addition, teachers can examine their role and responsibility in keeping current with research in the realms of ADHD and inclusive pedagogy. The process of critical reflection can lead teachers to view ADHD beyond the medical model and ultimately to an understanding of "disability as a problem of marginality" (Baglieri, 2008, p. 601). Engaging in the process of critical reflection causes educators to explore their understandings and insights of ADHD, thus providing an open frame of mind to focus on the children they teach.

When seeking favourable outcomes for students with ADHD, it is vital to focus on the child, rather than the disability: "Who we are trying to teach must precede what we are trying to teach" (Maté, 1999, p. 216). Teachers must make an effort to know and connect with each child, as the strength of these relationships provides the context in which to teach (Neufeld & Maté, 2004). Similarly, educators must take responsibility for establishing and preserving a genuine and nonthreatening relationship with their ADHD students (Maté, 1999). By accepting and valuing the essence of each child, teachers increase opportunities for children with ADHD to experience competence, incentive, and self-esteem (Gallichan & Curle, 2008). With a holistic view of their ADHD children in mind, teachers can look toward implementing proactive approaches that will enhance the development of their students.

Proactive approaches are essential to the development of students with ADHD, and entail planning for knowledge acquisition, responses, modelling interactions, strengths, flexibility, and empowerment. These preventative teacher attitudes, understandings, and methodologies must be undertaken in the context of creating humanizing educational experiences for their students, who regularly face discriminatory and hostile environments (Bartolomé, 1994). Taking a proactive approach to working with students with ADHD requires a holistic stance. It often necessitates overlooking short-term objectives for the long-term development of the child. Preventative approaches are beneficial to students with ADHD (Centre for ADD/ADHD Advocacy, Canada, n.d.; Sherman et al., 2008). Similarly, optimistic attitudes of teachers toward students with ADHD can promote positive effects on academic outcomes, and possibly transformative effects in the personal, social, and emotional domains of these children (Daley & Birchwood, 2010). Teacher use of proactive strategies is fundamental for those attempting to promote success for ADHD students, and a logical starting point is with the acquisition of knowledge.

Actively pursuing knowledge about ADHD can provide a solid foundation for teachers to create positive outcomes for their students. Teachers can obtain valuable information about the origins, symptoms, and manifestations of the disorder. They can use their intimate knowledge of their students with ADHD, in order to recognize how the disorder distinctively affects each child. They can ascertain their students' strengths, and their obstacles to academic, social, and personal success. Teachers can gain knowledge of their students' perspectives on having, and coping with, ADHD, such as feelings of isolation, being judged, lack of control, vulnerability, and negative sense of self (Gallichan & Curle, 2008). In addition, worthy insights can be attained regarding the families of their students, which may contribute to planning for educational success. Often, families of children with ADHD experience feelings of blame and emotional distress (Harborne, Wolpert, & Clare, 2004), and tend to believe that the cause of the disorder is organically based, as opposed to being caused by psychological or social factors (Dryer, Kiernan, & Tyson, 2006; Harborne et al., 2004). By assimilating the knowledge that they have gathered, teachers can plan to respond to their students with ADHD when situations arise, thus further promoting positive outcomes.

Planning for responses to behaviours in children with ADHD is paramount for student success. Due to the nature of the disorder, students with ADHD experience difficulty with typical classroom expectations, and exhibit behaviours such as fidgeting, disinterest, inattention,

disorganization, forgetfulness, inconsistent performance, self-restraint, and weighing consequences (Rowe, 2010). They regularly encounter failure and, for this reason, a deliberate attempt to provide significant amounts of positive feedback is necessary (Rowe, 2010). Degrading children for their mistakes serves to deflate their already unstable self-image and diminish their personal growth (Maté, 1999). Proactive teachers insightfully interpret the behaviours of their students with ADHD. They are intuitive of their own tendencies to be critical of unintentional student behaviours, and seek to determine why those responses may have been invoked (Maté, 1999). Planning to respond suggests that teachers can differentiate between ADHD symptoms and true behavioural issues, and react in purposeful ways that will promote positive outcomes. When educators master the skill of planning for responses, they become equipped to broaden their positive influence through deliberate modelling.

The ability to model appropriate interactions, for and with students with ADHD, can be helpful for students in a variety of ways. The manner in which teachers react to students with ADHD affects the perception of students by their peers; that is, negative teacher responses to typical ADHD behaviours correlate with lower social status assessments by their cohorts. (Sherman et al., 2008). These findings might be generalized to apply to other adults who work with ADHD students. Another important influence on the child with ADHD is parenting factors (Modesto-Lowe, Danforth, & Brooks, 2008). A lack of effective parenting skills can contribute to, and even intensify, the impulsivity deficits of a child, and contribute to further behavioural issues. It seems reasonable to expect, then, that teachers could have the same detrimental effects on their students with ADHD, thus providing motivation to employ proactive approaches. By modelling interactions, for and with children with ADHD, teachers advance student opportunities for acceptance by others, making each child's strengths more prominent than his or her challenges.

Planning for an ADHD student's strengths is a powerful tool in promoting positive outcomes. This preventative approach is particularly challenging, given the deficit model that schools tend to follow (Brendtro, Ness, & Mitchell, 2005; Lee, 2008). Similarly, words associated with ADHD tend to be clinical and derogatory in nature: *disorder, symptoms, prognosis, intervention, comorbid*, and *impairment*. Being strength driven necessitates a change in perspective, to one that seeks and fosters the natural skills and talents of each child. Teachers can facilitate this paradigm shift in subtle and persistent ways, by observing situations that students prosper in, and finding ways to cultivate these strengths (Gallichan & Curle, 2008). Similarly, teachers can help to facilitate self-recognition of strengths in the students whom they teach. Flexibility in thinking is required to make each child's strengths a priority, a way of thinking that can substantially improve the quality of life for children with ADHD.

Purposeful flexibility is an essential component of preventative teaching approaches that benefit students with ADHD. Being flexible connotes the ability to anticipate problematic situations, and accommodate as necessary, to resolve the issue. Educators can adapt the teaching space, methods, and daily classroom routines that they utilize, to foster academic growth (Kapalka, 2010). Similarly, they can adapt their approaches with their students to produce congruent results (Rowe, 2010). The extent to which a teacher will experience a child's ADHD as a challenge, depends on the level of harmony between the environment and that child's style of being (Gallichan & Curle, 2008). The term *reciprocal relationships* is used to describe the positive societal factors that make individuals with ADHD, feel more inspired and motivated to try, when they perceived others as showing support though flexibility (Gallichan & Curle, 2008). By intentionally avoiding rigidity in their approaches to working with students with ADHD teachers increase the likelihood of positive outcomes, thus leading their students toward a path of empowerment.

Empowerment is the hope for all students with ADHD; this quality suggests authority of self. For students who feel powerless (Gallichan & Curle, 2008), gaining control over their circumstances represents a substantial achievement. A sense of agency can be prompted in students with ADHD, when they have opportunities to experience accomplishment (Gallichan &

Curle, 2008). Similarly, educators can empower students by including them in action-planning (Young & Amarasinghe, 2010), a process that will also encourage self-advocacy. Teachers who openly communicate with their students, helping them to understand and come to terms with their disorder, move these children along the continuum of not only empowerment, but also self-acceptance and personal success.

The ultimate goal of educators is to facilitate the realization of each child's human potential. Despite the myriad of challenges that children with ADHD face, throughout their years of schooling and beyond, teachers provide hope that positive academic, social, and personal outcomes can prevail. True teaching is not only a science of methodologies and curriculum, but an art that involves developed intuition, authentic relationships, and a genuine determination to facilitate the optimal overall development in students. Teachers matter. Through honest critical reflection, holistic views of their students, and intentional, humanistic approaches, teachers have the opportunity to create positive outcomes for children with ADHD.

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Understanding Autism

Carole McCurry

Abstract

Children with autism can learn in the regular classroom. Educators need to fully understand the primary characteristics and associated features of autism, and they must develop instructional strategies that will meet the needs of each child. With all stakeholders engaged in the process and appropriate practices in place, the child with autism will experience success.

To include a student with autism effectively in the regular classroom, teachers need to have a better understanding of this disorder. They must have extensive knowledge of autism, with an ability to identify its primary characteristics and associated features. They must also develop instructional strategies that will meet the needs of each child. These strategies include social stories, visual supports, and work-systems. With all the stakeholders working together, the child will be successful in the regular classroom.

Definition of Autism

Autism is a complex disorder that affects the functioning of the brain (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth [MECY], 2005a). It is a lifelong developmental disability with symptoms that can present from mild to severe. Generally, a student will not show all possible symptoms and no single behaviour identifies autism. This disorder affects the ability of the child to interact, communicate, relate, play, imagine, and learn.

Primary Characteristics of Autism

All children diagnosed with autism share three primary characteristics. They have difficulty in social situations and with communication (MECY, 2005a), and they show restricted patterns of behaviours, interests, and activities (Neitzel, 2010). All students with autism share these primary characteristics, but no two students are exactly the same (MECY, 2005a). Nevertheless, these characteristics provide a foundation for understanding the students and their needs.

Lack of social interaction by students with autism inhibits their ability to make friends (MECY, 2005a). The children can not relate to others and do not understand that other children have different feelings or thoughts than they do. Children with autism do not play in the same manner as their peers. Their play is often routine and repetitive (MECY, 2005a). The inability to play spontaneously and creatively is a contributing factor in being unable to make friends. Also, children with autism can not read social situations and often react inappropriately by offering no eye contact, standing too close, or not responding at all to a situation (MECY, 2005a).

Inability to communicate effectively is another primary characteristic of autism (MECY, 2005a). Communication has two parts: verbal and nonverbal. Some children are able to express themselves well verbally, while others have multiple sound errors and are difficult to understand. Still others will have no speech at all. Nonverbal communication, which involves reading body language and facial expressions, is very difficult for these students (MECY, 2005a). Because they process information differently than their peers, their receptive language is limited. They often need visual information to understand the world around them. Since verbal communication (both receptive and expressive) is the main mode of communication in the classroom, students with autism tend to become frustrated when trying to communicate or understand what is being said to them (MECY, 2005a). All behaviour communicates. Therefore, when a child is acting out, the teacher needs to understand the reason for the behaviour. Educators need to consider

"if this behaviour could talk what would it be saying" (MECY, 2005a, p. 12). The student's reactions indicate that even without verbal language, there are other ways to communicate.

Lastly, children with autism generally have restricted patterns of behaviours, interests, and activities (MECY, 2005a). They generally gravitate to objects instead of people. They have repetitive body movements, such as hand flapping, rocking, lunging, or grimacing, which get in the way of completing tasks set out by the teacher. Their tendency to perseverate on an object, idea, or interest (MECY, 2005a) may be totally consuming for them, something that the rest of the world can not understand. Because they may become all consumed with certain things, they may also have difficulty with attention and motivation. Focusing the children on teacher-directed activities can be challenging. These children need structure and routine that they can follow in precise detail (MECY, 2005a). Changes in that structure and routine cause anxiety and stress.

Associated Features

Associated features are often observed in children with autism (MECY, 2005a). They may be either hyposensitive or hypersensitive to sensory information in the environment. Children with autism often experience anxiety that they may not express in an acceptable manner, which results in learning and behaviour difficulties. These children are often confused because communication is so difficult for them. Their confusion may be "expressed passively by shutting down or explosively by verbal or physical aggression" (MECY, 2005a, p. 21). Children with autism have limited problem-solving skills and independence, which renders the children heavily dependent on adult support. Finally, the developmental profile of children with autism is typically scattered. Therefore, these children learn and function differently than their classmates. These associated features are not used to make a diagnosis of autism, but they give educators a better understanding of the affected students.

Instructional Strategies

Students with autism bring many pieces with them to school, but never the whole puzzle. Teachers need to determine best practices for these children, based on a thorough understanding of each child. Educators need to recognize that although some may be nonverbal, these children still have the ability to learn (Kasa-Hendrickson, 2005). In order for these students to learn, teachers need to believe it to be possible. In the classroom, teachers have to be open for the children to demonstrate understanding of concepts differently, re-evaluate how each student learns, and expect struggles as they figure out how to support communication, social interaction, and behaviour (Kasa-Hendrickson, 2005). When planning instructional strategies for children with autism, appropriate methods must be implemented and all stakeholders need to be involved in the planning (Simpson, McKee, Teeter, & Beytien, 2007). The stakeholders include parents, teachers, therapists, and doctors. With everyone working together, the pieces of the puzzle have a better chance of coming together for the child.

It is important that students learn the basic rules of social interaction. These skills are best taught in the context of natural routines with direct instruction. A social story is a good way to teach these skills, because it "describes appropriate social cues and student responses in specific situations" (MECY, 2005b, p. 8). Children with autism often do not play with other kindergarten children. To teach a child what play looks like, a social story is written. The story is read to them over and over. At first, the book is simply read to the child multiple times throughout the day. Once the child is familiar with the story, it is used as a visual prompt prior to play time. The child is then given opportunities to try the play skills talked about in the book. Visual prompts are often used to remind the child what has been learned from the story. Social stories also set boundaries and expectations for the child, which are required in order for him or her to maintain control. In my kindergarten classroom, I have used social stories as an effective tool to teach children with autism the rules of social interaction.

If children with autism are going to manage in a regular classroom, they need to develop communication skills. A child's behaviour is one way of communicating. Visuals help the child to communicate, as well as to regulate the child's day (Hodgdon, 2003-2010). With a visual system in place, disruptive behaviours will likely decrease. Visuals can be used in schedules, to organize the child's day, to teach how to ask for specific things, to show how an activity is to be completed, or to offer a way to communicate as in the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). With these supports in place, the children who understand and learn visually are more likely to succeed. These tools help them to process language, organize their thinking, and remember information (Stokes, 1999-2010). In order for the visuals to be effective, the children need direct teaching in the use of these tools.

In my kindergarten room, I have effectively used visual schedules for children with autism. These schedules have two parts. The broader schedule is on the wall where the entire class can use it to see what will happen during the day. The child with autism then carries a more detailed schedule on a file folder. As he or she completes an activity, a card is moved to the "all done" side of the folder and the child can easily see which activity is up next. The visual schedule is successful because it effectively outlines the expectations of the day for the child. There are no surprises, and the child can easily see what comes next and when it is time to go home. To keep the child motivated and on task, sprinkled into the schedule are break cards, which gives him or her the opportunity to do something that is enjoyed.

Often, children with autism are dependent on adults to direct them and control their output. They need support, but not dependence on paraprofessionals (Angelides, Constantinou, & Leigh, 2009). For successful inclusion, these children need to become independent learners. A work system is an element of structured teaching developed by Division TEAACH (Carnahan, Hume, Clarke, & Borders, 2009). It is a visually organized system that gives children with autism understanding and clarity of a task. Work systems are one way of increasing independent on-task behaviour and decreasing verbal prompts from adults (Hume & Odom, 2007). Work systems tell a student what needs to be done, how much has to be done, and what to do next. They thus serve to organize the student. When a work system includes a visual component, it also increases productivity. Before children are able to use work systems independently, they need to be taught how to use them with activities that they know and enjoy. When teaching the work system to a child, adults need to ensure that their verbal prompting does not become part of the process of the work system (Carnahan et al., 2009). Once the child understands how the system works, and the visual supports are in place, the adult can step back and the child will remain independently on task and complete the given assignments (Henry, 2005).

Work systems can be used to teach routines in a child's day, during independent work time or in small-group lessons (Carnahan et al., 2009). In my classroom, the whole class might be working on a sorting activity at the same time that the child with autism is working on a sorting activity within his or her work system. Using the work system, the child is able to complete the task independently and move to the next activity without disrupting the class. Teaching the child how to use the work system takes time. It must be done properly or it will not be successful. In my classroom, I have found that less is more. As adults, we talk too much. The children with whom we are working need us to direct them to use the visual prompts provided within the work system. We have to do our best not to use verbal prompts. Experience has shown me that visual prompts can keep adults from becoming part of the work system. As the child follows the visuals in place for him or her, little support is needed from the educational assistant for the child to be successful during this part of the day.

Conclusion

Children with autism can be successfully included in the classroom when they have the support that they require. Teachers need to have a good understanding of autism, its primary characteristics, and associated features. They also need to be familiar with instructional

strategies such as social stories, visual supports, and work systems. The new perspective that children with autism bring to the classroom can benefit all children in their learning (Chandler-Olcott & Kluth, 2009). With parents, teachers, therapists, and doctors engaged in the process, and with appropriate practices in place, all children with autism have the ability to learn.

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Carole McCurry is currently completing a Graduate Diploma in special education. She has been teaching for twenty-one years: K-2 and Reading Recovery. She has two children, who keep her busy with 4H, highland dancing, and football. In her spare time, she goes camping, hiking, and bike riding with her family.

OPINION PAPERS

In Support of Extended School Hours

William Terry

I'll be retired in a few years. Whether as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, or principal, I've been part of numerous changes and improvements in education that have made my own school years seem backward. The modern students are offered much more intelligent classroom programs than we were.

I was a "war baby" after World War II, and boy, there were a lot of us! The school gym was converted into classrooms, our class sizes were over 40, and we were taught only core courses. In science, physics, chemistry, and biology were crammed into one course. We had no physical education until the walls were removed from the gym in grade 10. Even then, we received no instruction in the rules of sports. We played volleyball 30 students to a side, and baseball with 30 or more outfielders. School was as basic as one could imagine.

In the modern era, however, schooling has expanded into a large range of learning options that greatly enrich the education of our students. Schools have also inherited extra social programs, such as sex education, cultural enlightenment, and daily physical exercise. I support every improvement – every addition – of programs. Here's the problem: the school day in the 1960s was from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and the current school day is still 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We are compressing core courses, extra courses, and extracurricular programs into the same school hours, which to me seems impossible.

Certified courses must meet a prescribed number of minimum teaching minutes per day. For example, the mathematics and language arts time requirements consume the entire morning. Then there are time requirements for science, history, and social studies. The total time requirements for all courses exceed the day's school minutes. It is amazing that we manage to cover so much within the regular school day.

The chink in the setup is that we can do many things only by overlapping courses. In my opinion, today's lower standardized test scores are the result of trying to do everything for everyone. Japanese students score better than our students not because they are smarter than our children, but because they spend more time on task – they learn what they practise.

I don't think that the "vested interests" will allow us to cancel programs just because schools are overloaded with (albeit good) projects. The solution is to increase the school day. There – it's been said!

Just as important, we need to reset the whole educational system, in order to find ways to enable schools to teach the enriched programs. Let's not dump extra hours onto the teachers' workload, but reset the process to accommodate programs that are worth being in schools. Another option is to discard standardized tests that unfairly compare our students to other countries that have longer school days, more attention to core courses, and minimal extra programming. We are at the point of crossing from "much" to "too much," and I dread the next "great idea" that may be imposed on us as educators.

About the Author

William Terry has been a classroom teacher, special education teacher, and principal in northern and rural Manitoba, including several First Nations communities. He has a B.G.S., B.Ed., and M.Ed. from Brandon University. He also has the following certificates: special education, special education coordinator, principal one, and administrator two.

Issues Surrounding Teacher Burnout: Questions and Possible Answers to an Increasing Problem

Ted Stouffer

Teachers today are on the front lines of stress, exhaustion, and burnout. Few other professions experience the mass exodus of staff as does the teaching profession, with stress-related burnout cited as the most common cause. Stressors include feelings of little input, lack of support, changes in teaching assignments, low self-efficacy, and failure to team-build. Addressing these stressors has potential to reduce the number of resignations due to burnout.

Feelings of Little Input

Just like the children in the classroom, many teachers feel unimportant because they have little input into the decisions that affect them. Their interactions with students, parents, other staff, and administrators are often based on policies that they had no part in creating, such as disciplinary measures. If the teachers do not feel in control of the process, they are apt to withdraw and become discouraged. Their feelings of being undervalued may turn to fear, and a perceived threat takes on the spectre of something larger (Chang, 2009).

To combat this stressor, teachers need first to be involved in policy-making and other decisions. Even if they do not agree with the final decisions, they need to know that they were part of the process, and were heard. Then, particularly in relation to student discipline, they need to recognize their own emotions and learn appropriate coping strategies (Chang, 2009). When teachers understand that that not everything a student does is intended to be an attack against them, they are better able to take control of the situation, instead of feeling threatened.

Lack of Support

Lack of support also generates feelings of frustration and helplessness. The further teachers are from direct supervision, the more apt they are to feel job stress, conflicts, and uncertainty (Wachter, Clemens, & Lewis, 2008). Resource teachers and school counsellors are particularly affected because they hear stories about students' home lives and complaints about teachers. They may feel helpless to make positive changes when they must keep this information confidential, and they may feel isolated from the supportive channels of communication that they think are in place for other staff members.

School leaders can support teachers by building collegial relationships, providing avenues for dialogue among all staff members, and addressing harmful teacher attitudes (Cheung, 2009). Sometimes all it takes is for an administrator to acknowledge a teacher's negative feelings while explaining that the attitudes are not conducive to the school as a whole. Reducing teachers' supervision duties (Brock & Grady, 2008), in order to give them more time to collaborate, will also boost staff morale and make the teachers feel that they are supported.

Changes in Teaching Assignments

Individual teaching assignments change over time. When teachers have a high interest in the new assignment, they feel more in control and are less prone to burnout (Retelsdorf, Butler, Streblow, & Schiefele, 2009), but when they have little interest in it, they feel less in control and are prone to helplessness (Cenkseven-Onder & Sari, 2009). Depending on the amount of mental energy required, and the degree of input that a teacher has had in the decision to change assignments, the teacher may feel positively challenged or negatively stressed.

If teachers are given an opportunity to provide input into the changed teaching assignments and are not just told that they must teach a new subject area, they feel that they have some control in their professional lives. In many cases, the teachers may be able to suggest a subject that fits better with the school's needs than if they were not brought into the decision-making process. These teachers will feel rewarded, instead of trodden upon, because they are trusted for their professional abilities (Cenkseven-Onder & Sari, 2009).

Low Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy means feeling competent in meeting goals. When teachers feel inefficient or incapable of accomplishing tasks, they may develop low self-efficacy (Chang, 2009). Similarly, when teachers are unsure of the goals, or feel unrewarded or that the job is too demanding, they are apt to feel uncertain (Tomic & Tomic, 2008). The teachers then become preoccupied with feelings of ineffectiveness (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005), which weakens their self-efficacy. This weakened belief in one's ability can happen at any point in a teacher's career.

Teachers who have higher levels of self-efficacy are less prone to burnout (Coulter & Abney, 2009). Teachers who have higher feelings of existential fulfillment also experience fewer symptoms of burnout (Tomic & Tomic, 2008). When teachers self-reflect and are willing to learn and improve, they gain insight into themselves, and build self-efficacy. Using teacher colleagues who are experiencing similar situations, and being open to other sources of support, teachers can increase their self-efficacy and become more positive employees (Tatar, 2009).

Failure to Team-Build

When I started teaching, teachers would go straight to their classrooms, shut their doors, and not interact with other teachers during the day. Today, however, teachers need to rely on each other (Cheung, 2009), as more of what used to be parental responsibilities are placed on teachers and other school staff. In addition to the ABCs, teachers are responsible for healthy snacks, appropriate relationships, racial and religious tolerance, and numerous other value-based concepts. Positive relationships with students are paramount, but they require emotional attachment by the teacher. When team-building is absent or insufficient, teachers may feel overburdened by the increased workload and emotional toll of the modern classroom.

Principals hold a pivotal position in team-building by nurturing social supports and positive school climates (Weber, Weltle, & Lederer, 2005). Teachers feel less stressed when they can turn to peers, the principal, and counsellors for support, without fear of criticism for their mistakes (within reason). When teachers open their doors and develop relationships with each other, feelings of strength and togetherness develop, which ultimately supports the children who are the purpose of the institution in the first place.

Conclusion

Teachers can be negatively stressed by feelings of little input, lack of support, changes in teaching assignments, low self-efficacy, and failure to team-build. Unless these stressors are addressed, the effects can build to the point of eventual burnout and resignation from the profession. Principals play a key role in providing opportunities for teachers to make positive changes that will increase their feelings of having input, being supported, determining their teaching assignments, strengthening self-efficacy, and team-building, in order to create a thriving school community.

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About the Author

Since graduating from Brandon University with a Bachelor of Education, Ted Stouffer has continued taking courses and is currently working on his second Master of Education degree. His daughter has joined both parents in the education field while his son works in the movie industry.

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